

CHRISTIANITY & MENTAL HEALING

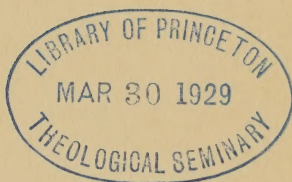
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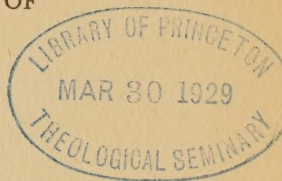
Section

CHRISTIANITY AND MENTAL HEALING

AN ANSWER TO THE CLAIMS OF
"CHRISTIAN SCIENCE"

BY

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PREFACE

THE contents of this little book have been given by the author in the form of lectures, and are now offered to a wider public in the belief that others may be glad to have in one small volume a brief description and criticism of the tenets of "Christian Science," with a short account of the Christian teaching on the matters concerned, and suggestions as to the legitimate place of spiritual healing in the practice of the Church. In preparing the lectures I have derived much help from a number of books on the subject, particularly Miss Sturge's "The Truth and Error of Christian Science," dealing with the philosophy; Dr. Paget's "The Faith and works of Christian Science," concerned more particularly with the medical aspect; and Dr. Dearmer's "Body and Soul," dealing with spiritual healing and its history in the Christian Church. A short bibliography, including these and other books, is appended for the convenience of those who wish to pursue the subject more fully.

In conclusion, I want to express my deep gratitude to Canon B. K. Cunningham for his invaluable encouragement and advice.

T. G. P.

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CHRISTIANITY AND MENTAL HEALING

I. "CHRISTIAN SCIENCE" (1)

My object in these lectures is to discuss with you the questions raised by what is known as "Christian Science." This movement, during the last thirty or forty years, has gained a considerable following both in this country and in the United States, in which it arose; and whatever conclusions we may come to about its teaching, we shall readily agree that among those who have embraced it are people of high character who sincerely believe that in it they have found the way to health and happiness. I propose to examine this teaching with you, to see what measure of truth there is in it, and to suggest the criticism to which it is open from the Christian point of view. From this we shall naturally go on to consider the wider subject of mental and spiritual healing generally, and endeavour to see what place that should occupy in our religion.

"Christian Science" was founded by an American lady, Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, who was born in the year 1821 in New Hampshire, U.S.A., where her father was a small farmer. I need not describe her early life, which was spent in poverty and frequent ill-health. She married three times, first a bricklayer named Glover, who died a few months later, second an itinerant dentist named Patterson, whom she divorced for desertion, and thirdly Asa G. Eddy, who at the time was a sewing-machine agent. It was not until she reached middle life that she began the movement which was to gain thousands of adherents, make her famous, and bring her a large fortune.

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Much controversy has raged round her claim to be the real originator of her system. It, or something very like it, was taught some years before Mrs. Eddy founded her movement, by a certain Phineas P. Quimby, a village clock-maker, who, after experimenting with mesmerism, worked out a system of mental healing, in which he claimed to cure his patients "by the benevolent power of mind," teaching that disease and pain were only the creation of the mind, and could be cured by ceasing to believe in them. It is said that Mrs. Eddy really obtained her ideas from Quimby; and indeed, his family have published his voluminous manuscripts, and letters from Mrs. Eddy to him, which seem to prove the point conclusively. But we need not pursue the question, as the manner in which Mrs. Eddy came by her ideas does not necessarily affect the truth or falsehood of the ideas themselves; and in any case she must be given the credit for the force and organising ability which popularised them, and made them the basis of the Christian Science movement.

Her book, "Science and Health," which is the authoritative statement of her teaching, was copyrighted in 1870, and first published in 1875, and it has since gone through an enormous number of editions and frequent revision. She first formed her disciples into an organised Church in 1879. It was re-established upon its present basis in 1892, under the title of "The First Church of Christ Scientist, Boston, Massachusetts," and ever since it has carried on a steady and well-organised propaganda both in its native country and in Great Britain. Until her death in 1910, at the age of eighty-nine, Mrs. Eddy acted as the sole head of the movement, and exercised a remarkable dominating power over her disciples. Since then its affairs have been controlled by a Board of Directors in the United States.

Now, with this brief introduction, let us examine this system which its author called "Christian Science."

She does not, of course, use the word "science" as we ordinarily employ it, as referring to the physical and natural sciences; but she gives her own definition of it: "that which is based on Divine Principle, demonstrated according to a given rule, and subjected to proper tests" (p. 341)*—*i.e.*, by using the word "science" she means that it is an ordered and logical system, capable of practical demonstration.

This system is set out in her book, "Science and Health," but it is very difficult to gather at first sight from the book exactly what it is. "Science and Health" is surely one of the most unsystematic books ever written. The author's style is rambling and confused; she seems to have little conception of following out a consecutive line of argument, but wanders on, leaving a point and returning to it again later, and contradicting herself repeatedly. These unfortunate defects in the style of her book make it extremely irritating to anyone with a scientifically trained mind; nevertheless, it is not fair to condemn it simply on such grounds. As a defender of Mrs. Eddy writes: "Mrs. Eddy had only such advantages as were available in a small town of New England sixty or seventy years ago, and she was in a great measure self-taught. Consequently when she wrote her book she did not express herself as possibly she might have expressed herself had she had the same educational advantages as her critics." I have therefore made every effort in studying the book to allow for this, and to get at the author's real meaning.

I think the fundamental points in its teaching may fairly be summed up as follows: God is the only real existence, and God is Mind or Spirit, and is Good. Man is a spiritual being, the image or reflection of God. Matter and evil are not real; and therefore our bodies are not real, and disease of the body is also unreal.

* The page references are to the 1913 edition of "Science and Health," but I believe they are substantially the same in the later editions.

The appearance of our bodies and their diseases and other evils is an illusion or false belief. If we get rid of the illusion by ceasing to believe in it, the disease and evil will disappear. It was by understanding this that Jesus healed sickness and dispelled sin; but it was neglected after the early days of Christianity, until it was again Divinely revealed through Mrs. Eddy.

The suggestion that this material universe, so solid in appearance, and the suffering and disease which seem the all-too-frequent lot of the human race, are unreal fantasies, is certainly at first sight rather startling. Yet suppose it were true, suppose my material body, which is so often the seat of pain and sickness, is after all but the creation of my mind; that I have only to think myself well to be well; that the fear of disease and disaster is a needless terror to be conquered at once by the understanding that these dreaded foes have no real existence—certainly a new universe would be opened up. We can, at any rate, understand the appeal which this thought could have to unhappy souls burdened with illness and pain. That is the promise which Mrs. Eddy's gospel holds out. Let us, then, see how she attempts to demonstrate its truth.

It is based on the fundamental assertion that "God is All-in-all." "The starting-point of Divine Science," the author writes, "is that God, Spirit, is All-in-all, and that there is no other might nor mind" (page 275). And "God is incorporeal, divine, supreme, infinite, Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Love, Truth" (page 465). "God is infinite, the only Life, Substance, Spirit, or Soul, the only intelligence in the universe" (page 330). Therefore, the author argues, if God is All, and is Mind or Spirit, and is Good, there is no room for the material and the evil. These cannot, then, be real.

"The fundamental propositions of divine metaphysics," we read, "are summarised in the four following, to me self-evident, propositions:

1. God is All-in-all.
2. God is Good. Good is Mind.
3. God, Spirit, being all, nothing is matter.
4. Life, God, omnipotent good, deny death, evil, sin, disease. Disease, sin, evil, death, deny good, omnipotent God, Life.

Which of the denials in proposition four is true? Both are not, cannot be true. According to the Scripture I find that God is true, ‘but every [mortal] man a liar’” (page 113).

Well, then, let us examine more closely this statement that “God is All-in-all.” The thought that God is All, or that All is God, is, of course, not new. It is what is known as Pantheism, and is the basis of more than one non-Christian religion. It is an element, *e.g.*, in Hinduism. But the Pantheist does not on that account say that matter and evil are unreal. He sees everything, material and spiritual, good and bad, as equally a manifestation of God. God is in the sinner as much as in the saint, in the tiger as much as in the man. God and the universe become, practically, identical. God is the All, the infinite whole, and everything that exists is simply a part of God. The aim of religion to the Pantheist is usually to realise his oneness with the Whole, to merge the sense of his own identity in that of the Divine Being.

Mrs. Eddy, however, does not teach that. God, she says, is infinite Mind or Spirit, and is Good—which is, of course, the Christian view. But instead of allowing that this infinite Mind has created the finite material universe, which though dependent on is yet distinct from Himself, she says that God is All, and insists that the finite material universe does not really exist at all. All that really exists is the infinite Mind or God, and its manifestations in the form of human minds. All the material universe is not real or God-created. That is quite clearly her meaning. She is not simply suggesting that Mind is the supreme Reality, and that created things are the “thoughts” of God—a

familiar form of idealistic philosophy. It is true that one or two of her statements taken by themselves might seem to mean this—*e.g.*, “The universe is filled with spiritual ideas which He evolves” (page 295). But from many other statements it is clear that in her opinion these “ideas” of God do not include matter. “Matter and Mind are opposites. One is contrary to the other in its very nature and essence ; hence both cannot be real” (page 270). “Matter examined in the light of divine metaphysics disappears” (page 274). “Matter did not originate in God, Spirit” (page 275). “Is Spirit the source or creator of matter? Science reveals nothing in Spirit out of which to create matter. Divine metaphysics explains away matter” (page 278). “There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestations, for God is All-in-all ; Spirit is immortal truth ; matter is mortal error. Spirit is the real and eternal ; matter is the unreal and temporal” (page 468).

There are several points in the above quotations which call for comment, such as the statement that matter and spirit are “opposites,” or the bracketing of “unreal” and “temporal,” but we will leave them for the present. The point which is quite clear is that Mrs. Eddy considers matter to be unreal, a mere illusion or error. We naturally ask, then, where does this illusion come from ?

It will not do to say simply that it is an error or false belief of our minds, for if a man is, as Mrs. Eddy declares, a “manifestation” or “reflection” of the Divine Mind, “spiritual and perfect, incapable of sin, sickness, and death” (page 475), we could not have false beliefs. A mind which could have “false beliefs” would itself be evil, but according to our author, evil does not exist, and therefore such a mind could not exist. At the outset we seem to have encountered an insuperable objection to her philosophy !

To proceed, however, we are told that these illusions arise from something called “mortal mind,” which is,

we are informed, “a solecism in language, and involves an improper use of the word *mind*” (page 114). We read of matter as “a subjective state of mortal mind, which this same so-called mind names *matter*” (page 108). What, then, is this “mortal mind,” which is not mind in the proper sense of the word, yet can have false beliefs? It is very important for us to find this out, for it is evidently from this “mortal mind” that there comes the whole of the material universe, which provides all our ordinary daily cares, as well as the pains and diseases from which we suffer.

“The author calls sick and sinful humanity *mortal mind*,” we read, “meaning by this term the flesh opposed to Spirit, the human mind and evil in contradistinction to the Divine Mind, or Truth and Good” (page 114). But from this it appears that “mortal mind” is matter and evil, only another name for these illusions, not their cause. We are no nearer to an answer to our question. On page 115, however, we find a paragraph headed “Scientific Translation of Mortal Mind,” from which we may naturally expect to get a clearer idea of what the author means:

“SCIENTIFIC TRANSLATION OF MORTAL MIND

First Degree: Depravity.

PHYSICAL.—Evil beliefs, passion and appetites, fear, depraved will, pride, envy, deceit, hatred, revenge, sin, sickness, disease, death.

UNREALITY.

Second Degree: Evil beliefs disappearing.

MORAL.—Humanity, honesty, affection, compassion, hope, faith, meekness, temperance.

TRANSITIONAL QUALITIES.

Third Degree: Understanding.

SPIRITUAL.—Wisdom, purity, spiritual understanding, spiritual power, love, health, holiness.

REALITY.

In the third degree mortal mind disappears ; and man as God's image appears."

Frankly, this only seems to make the problem darker than ever. Here we have something labelled "physical" evolving into the "spiritual," in spite of Mrs. Eddy's repeated assertions that Spirit and matter have nothing whatever to do with one another ; unreality evolving into reality ; and then, just when "mortal mind" has become real, we are told that it disappears altogether. If, of course, the above is simply meant to suggest that we can progress from evil thoughts and passions to good, we can attach some sort of meaning to it. Only, in that case, it still leaves quite unanswered the question, what is this "mortal mind" from which, according to Mrs. Eddy, the evil thoughts and passions come? Let us turn to the Glossary at the end of the book. There we read : "MORTAL MIND. Nothing claiming to be something, for Mind is immortal ; mythology ; error creating other errors ; a suppositional material sense, *alias* the belief that sensation is in matter . . . the opposite of Spirit, and therefore the opposite of God and good . . . material sense, sin, sickness, death."

What are we to make of that? How can nothing claim anything? How can nothing—a blank, an empty void—create, or believe, or be the opposite of anything? I am afraid that the only conclusion the most patient investigator could come to is that the whole conception of "mortal mind" is unintelligible nonsense. And when we are told straight out, on page 103, "in reality there *is no* mortal mind . . ." we are not surprised that we have completely failed to discover what it is.

In short, the attempt to "explain away" matter breaks down, for it is no explanation to say that this unreal illusion arises from something which itself does not exist!

Of course, all along what Mrs. Eddy means is that matter and evil are false beliefs of our minds ;

only that implies that our minds are themselves evil, which she insists they are not, for evil does not exist. Therefore she invents "mortal mind," which is mind and is not mind, exists and does not exist, just as it suits the purpose of the moment.

I have no doubt she was quite sincere. Her lack of logic, and inability to express herself clearly, prevented her from realising that her theory was nonsense. When she seized upon the initial idea that "God is All," no doubt she honestly thought she had made a grand discovery, not realising that she was using the expression in an entirely impossible sense. The only sense in which it is possible to make that assertion is that of Pantheism. You cannot say that God is all, and at the same time insist that there are a whole lot of things which are not God. It is no use dismissing these things as illusions. You must explain where these illusions come from, and that, as we have seen, it is impossible to do.

Before we pass on it is worth while to notice one or two further considerations. To deny the existence of matter is flying in the face of our senses. Mrs. Eddy insists, therefore, that the physical senses are false and incapable of reporting the truth to us. "The five physical senses are the avenues and instruments of human error" (page 293). "Divine science reverses the false testimony of the material senses" (page 273). "The material senses oppose this, but there are no material senses" (page 278). But our senses are the only means by which we can gain any knowledge at all. If our senses are illusory, then we certainly cannot gain any knowledge about Christian Science any more than about anything else. What but the physical sense of sight enables us to read Mrs. Eddy's book? Yet she tells us that this sense is unreal and incapable of revealing the truth to us!

There are also certain simple logical fallacies repeated again and again in the author's arguments,

which it would be as well to point out. For example, on page 113 we read: "The metaphysics of Christian Science, like the method in mathematics, proves the rule by inversion—e.g., there is no pain in Truth, no truth in pain; no nerve in Mind, no mind in nerve; no matter in Mind, no mind in matter; no matter in Life, no life in matter; no matter in Good, no good in matter." But of course it is a rule in mathematics, and in logic, that the converse, or opposite, of every proposition is *not* true. Try a few more examples of reasoning on this line: All oranges are fruits, therefore all fruits are oranges; there is no house in window, therefore no window in house; there is no sky in blue, therefore no blue in sky; there is (as a pungent critic of Mrs. Eddy remarks) no book in science, therefore no science in (Mrs. Eddy's) book! "If mind is real, then matter, the opposite of mind, is unreal," argues Mrs. Eddy. First, what is meant by saying that matter is the "opposite" of mind? They are unlike—entirely different categories—you might as well say that chalk is the "opposite" of cheese. And even if they were "opposite," it does not follow that they could not both exist. It would be as reasonable to argue that if East is real, then West, the opposite of East, must be unreal.

Another fallacy which Mrs. Eddy frequently employs is to assume that the only possible connection between two things is that of *causation*. She says, quite truly, "Matter cannot of itself see, feel, hear, taste, or smell," and then argues that therefore the material organs of the body have nothing whatever to do with seeing, feeling, etc. True, these organs are not the *cause* of the sensations of sight, etc., but they are nevertheless the *means* by which these sensations reach the mind. Mrs. Eddy's logic ignores this possibility altogether. Such drawing of false conclusions from perfectly true premises is found throughout the book, and is particularly mischievous, as uncritical people, seeing the truth of the premise, are apt to accept the conclusion also.

Another common error is that of using a word in two different senses, and arguing from either sense indiscriminately—*e.g.*, "It is a self-evident error that there can be such a reality as organic, animal, or vegetable life, when it always ends in death, for Life is never for a moment extinct. . . ." Here she herself marks the two different senses by using a capital L in one case and not in the other. By Life is meant Life in an eternal and absolute sense, the principle of Life which is of the being of God. Life in that sense is truly eternal and can never become extinct. But when we speak of the life of an animal or plant, we are using the word to mean simply a temporary manifestation of life in the physical sphere. Yet although Mrs. Eddy herself marks the distinction between the two by the use of the capital letter, she argues as though in both cases Life in the eternal absolute sense were meant, and asks us to believe that because the absolute Life is eternal, there can be no temporary manifestation of it in a physical organism, and therefore no physical organism!

Now let us turn to consider the object for which all this theory of the unreality of matter was developed. It was in order to deny the reality of the material body, and especially its dependence on material means of health, and its liability to disease. In fact, when we get to the point, the unreality of matter is forgotten except when it is convenient to remember it. The body is treated as a genuine enough reality, and the whole object of this book of more than 500 pages is to tell us how to keep the body in health and comfort, in spite of its being an illusion! True, I suppose a comfortable illusion is better than an uncomfortable one, but if it is an illusion, surely it is more logical to try and get rid of it altogether than to preserve it as long as possible.

Mrs. Eddy says that food is not necessary for the body. "The fact is, food does not affect the absolute Life of man, and this becomes self-evident when we

learn that God is our Life" (page 388). (This is another example of the fallacy referred to above—confusion between two senses of the word Life.) "Admit the common hypothesis that food is the nutriment of life, and there follows the necessity for another admission in the opposite direction—that food has power to destroy Life, God" (page 388). (It would be as reasonable to say, "Admit the common hypothesis that fire produces heat, and there follows the necessity for another admission in the opposite direction—that fire produces cold." And there is the same confusion about Life.)

Mrs. Eddy is not bold enough, however, to advocate the carrying out of this view about food in practice, and adds, "It would be foolish to venture beyond our present understanding, foolish to stop eating until we gain perfection, and a clear comprehension of the living Spirit" (page 388).

The only point in which the theory is really applied is in the treatment of disease. Disease is not real—that is the great contention throughout the book. It is simply a product of "mortal" mind. "What is termed disease does not exist" (page 188). "The cause of all so-called disease is mental, a mortal fear" (page 377). "Disease being a belief, a latent illusion of mortal mind, the sensations would not appear if the error of belief was met and destroyed by truth" (page 168). The germ of truth in this is that some diseases—those which a doctor terms hysterical—are of mental origin, and can be cured by mental treatment, of which more in Lecture 4. But Mrs. Eddy makes no distinction between hysteria and definite organic disease. "One disease is no more real than another. All disease is the result of education.* . . . Hence decided types of acute disease are quite as ready to yield to Truth as the less distinct types and chronic forms of disease. Truth handles the most malignant contagion with perfect assurance" (page 176).

It follows from this that all ordinary means of heal-

* *I.e.*, of the belief that it exists.

ing, all medicines, drugs, bandages, poultices, the care of nurse and doctor, must be rejected. If these material means seem to benefit a patient, it is only because "mortal mind" believes that they will, not because they have any effect in themselves. "It is mortal mind, not matter, which brings to the sick whatever good they may seem to receive from materiality" (page 169). "Mortal belief is all that enables a drug to cure mortal ailments" (page 174). They are really harmful, and, of course, unnecessary. "To reduce inflammation, dissolve a tumour, or cure organic disease, I have found divine Truth more potent than all lower remedies" (page 181).

The real way to heal disease, she says, is to convince the patient of the Truth, that he is not ill at all, that his sickness is only due to "mortal mind." "A patient under the influence of mortal mind is healed only by removing the influence on him of this mind, by emptying his thought of the false stimulus and reaction of will-power, and filling it with the divine energies of Truth" (page 186). "The efficient remedy is to destroy the patient's false belief by both silently and audibly arguing the true facts in regard to harmonious being—representing man as healthy instead of diseased, and showing that it is impossible for matter to suffer" (page 376). "Tell him that he suffers only as the insane suffer from false beliefs" (page 421). "Insist vehemently on the great fact which covers the whole ground, that God, Spirit, is all, and that there is none beside him. There is *no disease*" (page 421).

This doctrine applies not only to disease, but to accidents. "When an accident happens you think or exclaim, 'I am hurt!' Your thought is more powerful than your words, more powerful than the accident itself to make the injury real. Now reverse the process. Declare you are not hurt, and understand the reason why, and you will find the ensuing good effects to be in exact proportion to your disbelief in physics, and your fidelity to divine metaphysics, confidence in

God, All " (page 397). Even the loss of a limb can be remedied by the same means. " When the unthinking lobster loses its claw, the claw grows again. If the Science of Life were understood then the human limb would be replaced as readily as the lobster's claw—not with an artificial limb, but with the genuine one " (page 489).

Not only are physical means of healing rejected, but also the laws of exercise and hygiene. Exercise, she says, is not necessary to keep the body healthy. Because the muscles of the blacksmith's arm are strongly developed, it does not follow that exercise has produced this result. " Not because of muscular exercise, but by reason of the blacksmith's faith in exercise, his arm becomes stronger " (page 199). " Is civilisation only a higher form of idolatry, that man should bow down to a flesh-brush, to flannels, to baths, diet, exercise, and air ? " (page 174). " The daily ablutions of an infant are no more natural or necessary than would be the process of taking a fish out of water every day and covering it with dirt in order to make it thrive more vigorously in its natural element " (page 413). One is relieved to find, however, that Mrs. Eddy does not deprecate washing altogether, for she adds: " I insist on bodily cleanliness within and without . . . but in caring for an infant one need not wash his little body all over each day in order to keep it as sweet as the new-blown flower." Though, personally, I cannot see why Christian Scientists need wash. If they can cure broken arms and duodenal ulcers and even grow new legs by understanding Divine Science, it ought to be much easier to cure a simple thing like a smut on the nose, just as much a production of " mortal mind " as the others. I fear they are sadly inconsistent ; in fact, if they were really consistent in their application of the theory that Mind is all and matter nothing, they would neither eat, drink, sleep, rest, work nor play—they would do nothing but sit still and think. Of course, the theory cannot be consistently applied—unless one wants to commit

suicide—which surely should be enough to convince any sensible person that it is all wrong, apart from its inherent logical contradictions which we have already considered.

The only element of reason in all Mrs. Eddy's denunciation of the ordinary medical treatment of disease lies in the fact that undoubtedly there is far too much preoccupation with disease in our artificial civilisation, and thousands of people who are constantly trying this or that favourite nostrum, or boring their friends with the fashionable fad about calories or proteids or vitamins, would be far better for throwing away their patent medicines and pills and living a simple, normal life. We may certainly agree with Mrs. Eddy when she says: “Our forefathers . . . had less time for selfishness, coddling, and sickly after-dinner talk. The exact amount of food the stomach could digest was not discussed . . .” (page 175). “The primitive custom of taking no thought about food left the stomach and bowels free to act in obedience to nature . . .” (page 176). But it is a far cry from this to repudiating all sane medical treatment when it is needed, and saying that all disease is an illusion and that matter does not exist!

Here we will leave the Christian Science teaching about disease and its cure, as we shall return to it in Lecture 4, when we shall discuss the question of how far it really is effective, and see the explanation of such success as it has.

II. "CHRISTIAN SCIENCE" (2).

WE have discussed the fundamental tenets of Christian Science about matter and disease; now let us see what Mrs. Eddy teaches about God and our Lord Jesus Christ. She claims that her system is Christian and represents the true teaching of Christ, which was obscured after the early days of Christianity until it was again revealed to her. It is, indeed, a fuller revelation than before. She says of it: "A higher and more practical Christianity . . . meeting the needs of mortals in sickness and health, stands at the door of this age knocking for admission" (page 224). "God had been graciously preparing me during many years for the reception of this *final revelation* of the absolute divine Principle of scientific mental healing" (page 107). Writing in the *Christian Science Journal*, January, 1901, she said: "It was not myself, but the divine power of truth and love infinitely above me, which dictated 'Science and Health.' I should blush to write this book, as I have, were it of human origin and I apart from God its author; but as I was only a scribe, echoing the harmonies of Heaven in divine metaphysics, I cannot be supermodest in my estimation of the Christian Science textbook."

Whatever we may think of Christian Science as a whole, or of these claims of its author, we must agree that it does lay great stress on the reality of God, even though it does so by denying the reality of His creation; and in this materialistic age that must be reckoned in its favour. That God is the supreme—indeed, the only—reality is a constant theme throughout the book. It is very difficult, however, to be sure what the author means by God, as so many of her statements are vague and contradictory. In many passages God is spoken of as a "Principle." "The Principle of divine meta-

physics is God” (page 111). “By interpreting God as a corporeal Saviour, but not as the saving Principle or divine Love, we shall continue to seek salvation through pardon and not through reform” (page 285). In another place (her book “Yes and No,” page 28) she writes: “Is there a personal deity? God is Love, and Love is Principle, not person. Of God as a person, human reason, imagination, and revelation give us no knowledge.” Taken by themselves these and many similar passages seem to imply a conception of God as a sort of blind, unconscious “force,” a “spiritual electricity,” somewhat akin to such modern philosophies as that of Bergson’s “Life Force.” This, of course, is a definitely non-Christian conception, but I am not sure that Mrs. Eddy really intends that, and possibly she only means to protest against a crude anthropomorphism. In discussing Christian Science we must bear in mind the narrow and inadequate type of Christianity in which its author was brought up—a point on which I shall have something more to say later. Her vague language about God may only be a reaction against the primitive ideas of the New England Puritanism in which she was cradled—of an almost corporeal Jehovah sitting up above in a localised Heaven.

Yet although we must, in using the word “Person,” avoid any such crude conception of God as that, it does not do to substitute such a word as “Principle.” When we speak of God as “Personal,” we mean, of course, something infinitely higher than human personality. But “Personality” is, after all, the highest word we possess, and it is no improvement to call Him “Principle,” which must suggest that He is simply a vague sort of “force.” You cannot love or worship a Principle or address it as Father as Christ taught us; and therefore, in spite of the possibility of misunderstanding, we must hold to the Christian conception of God as Personal.

But although we may give Mrs. Eddy the benefit of the doubt, and absolve her from the charge of denying

a Personal Deity, there is another side to her teaching about God which is most distinctly opposed to Christianity. In saying that man is the "image and likeness of God," she does not, apparently, mean that man is a spiritual being created by God; for she says, "harmonious and immortal man has existed for ever" (page 302). "The Soul or Mind of the spiritual man is God" (page 302). "If ever there was a moment when man did not express the divine perfection, then there was a moment when man did not express God, and consequently a time when Deity was unexpressed—that is, without entity" (page 470). "The universe, inclusive of man, is as eternal as God, who is its divine immortal Principle" (page 554). In other words, man is co-existent and co-eternal with God, neither being able to exist without the other. This is, perhaps, an echo of the philosophy of Spinoza. It is certainly not the teaching of Christ or the Bible, for it amounts to destroying the conception of a Creator altogether, and making man into a God. Like every statement in the book, it is contradicted by other passages, but it occurs so prominently and frequently that it must be regarded as the real teaching of Christian Science.

We have already noticed that Mrs. Eddy denies that God created the material world; and if the material world is unreal, an illusion, it follows that God, who is pure Mind, untroubled with the false beliefs of "mortal mind," cannot know anything about the material universe or our fleshly bodies at all. He is quite unaware of their illusory existence, or of our illusory pains, sins, and shortcomings. A defender of Christian Science writes, "God has no knowledge of evil, and is not conscious of this material world, with all its sin, sickness, and suffering."* How is it possible to reconcile such an idea with our Lord's teaching of the Heavenly Father, who knows every one of our earthly needs before we ask Him, who has "numbered all the hairs of our heads,"

* C. H. Lea, "A Plea for the Unbiased Investigation of Christian Science."

who forgives us our sins, if we forgive our brethren? To pray to Him for our daily bread, for the forgiveness of our trespasses, for deliverance from evil, is clearly impossible.

Mrs. Eddy, however, provides a new version of the Lord's Prayer, which she says is its "spiritual meaning," and which is read out in Christian Science services line by line alternately with the version of our Lord.

"Our Father-Mother God, all-harmonious.

Adorable one.

Thy Kingdom is come. Thou art ever-present.

Enable us to know—as in heaven so on earth—God is omnipotent, supreme.

Give us grace for today; feed the famished affections. And Love is reflected in love.

And God leadeth us not into temptation, but delivereth us from sin, disease, and death.

For God is infinite—all Power, all Life, Truth, and Love, over all, and All."

The chapter on Prayer in "Science and Health," in which this occurs, contains some sentiments which, taken by themselves, are quite admirable. The author insists that prayer must be sincere, that it must represent the real desires of the heart; that confession is not a mechanical method of obtaining forgiveness, without real repentance, and so on. She combines this with a strong denunciation of audible prayer, about which she is very scornful. "The 'divine ear' is not an auditory nerve" (page 7). "Audible prayer is impressive; it gives a momentary solemnity and elevation to thought. But does it produce any lasting benefit?" (page 7). Prayer, she insists, must be mental. Of course, all prayer is mental; no one supposes that God "hears" our prayers the better for their being spoken; that is only a necessary device so that we may pray in common. But when we come to study her words more carefully, it is clear that more lies in Mrs. Eddy's insistence that prayer must be mental than that it should be silent. Instead of prayer

as it is understood by a Christian—the loving conversation between child and Father, the worship of Creator by His creatures—she largely substitutes “affirmation.” Thus in the version of the Lord’s Prayer above, most of the petitions are changed into assertions or affirmations about God. The essential thing in Christian Science is not to love and worship a Personal God and Saviour, but to “understand” the truth. Thus she says, “Audible prayer can never do the work of spiritual understanding” (page 7). “The common custom of praying for the recovery of the sick finds help in blind belief, whereas help should come from the enlightened understanding” (page 12). “If God were understood, instead of merely believed, this understanding would establish health” (page 203).

There is more than an element of truth in this. It is most important that we should have a right understanding of the nature of God. To have a false conception of God is idolatry; and far more harm, probably, has been done in the world by false beliefs about God than by disbelief in Him. But stated as the whole truth it is entirely inadequate, for it leaves out the essential personal relationship between man and his Maker, and tends to substitute mere “intellectualism” for a humble Christian faith.

More unfortunate still is the Christian Science attitude towards sin. In the version of the Lord’s Prayer quoted above one of the most drastic changes is that of the petition “Forgive us our trespasses.” How this can be held to mean “Love is reflected in love” is certainly not very clear; but the reason for the change is obvious—we really have no trespasses to be forgiven, for sin, like all other evil, is an illusion about which God knows nothing. Sin is a “false belief” (page 480). “Man is spiritual and perfect . . . incapable of sin, sickness, and death” (page 475). “The belief of sin . . . is an unconscious error in the beginning” (page 188). It is only right to say that in practice Mrs. Eddy upholds a high enough standard of conduct. Her code of ethics is

practically that accepted by Christians, and she urges that we should live in a spirit of love and truth and self-sacrifice; though, of course, there is nothing new in this part of her teaching to justify the foundation of a new religion. In view of this, however, it is difficult to understand exactly what she means by saying that sin is a belief, or an error. Does she mean that sinful acts are themselves an illusion, or merely that sin is *due* to erroneous belief, and is real enough itself? Is an act of cruelty, for instance, itself an illusion—surely a very shocking thing to say—or does she look upon the cruelty as real, but as *caused* by the doer's wrong beliefs? There is a fundamental confusion of thought here; but at any rate in practice, since God knows nothing about evil, it is no use praying to Him for forgiveness. Christian Science does not encourage a “humble and contrite heart.”

Now let us turn to Mrs. Eddy's teaching about our Lord. We find again and again such sentences as the following: “Jesus represented Christ, the true idea of God” (page 316). “Christ, Truth, was demonstrated through Jesus to prove the power of Spirit over flesh” (page 316). “Jesus demonstrated Christ, he proved that Christ is the divine idea of God” (page 332). The impression that one gathers from this is that by Christ is not meant a Person, but the “Truth,” *i.e.*, the principles of Christian Science. “The true Logos* is demonstrably Christian Science” (page 134). Jesus was simply a man like other men, who taught this “Truth.” This idea is brought out clearly by her interpretation of the confession of St. Peter at Cæsarea Philippi, when our Lord asked, “Whom say ye that I am?” and Peter answered, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Mrs. Eddy explains it thus: “Whom say ye that I am?” means “Who or what is it that is able to do the work so mysterious to the popular mind?” And the reply, “Thou art the Christ,”

* The “Word” of St. John i. 1, etc.

means "The Messiah is what thou hast declared—Christ, the Spirit of God, of Truth, Life, and Love, which heals mentally" (page 137). I need hardly point out that such an interpretation of the words is impossible and utterly ignores all the historical meaning which the word Christ had to Jewish hearers. But it reveals quite clearly what is the Christian Science teaching about our Lord, which is most certainly not that of Christianity.

It was by His perception of the Truth—*i.e.*, Christian Science—that Jesus healed sickness and raised the dead. "Jesus restored Lazarus by the understanding that he had never died, not by an admission that his body had died, and then lived again" (page 75). I cannot see that there is the slightest foundation in the New Testament for this suggestion that Jesus healed people by teaching that disease and death were illusions, or that he regarded matter as unreal. But Jesus, Mrs. Eddy says, had not a complete understanding of the Truth. "At the time when Jesus felt our infirmities he had not conquered all the beliefs of the flesh or his sense of material life" (page 53). "Had wisdom characterised all the sayings of Jesus, He would not have prophesied his own death, and thereby hastened or caused it" ("Miscellaneous Writings," page 84). On page 44 of "Science and Health," however, we are told that He did not really die at all. "His disciples believed Jesus to be dead while he was hidden in the sepulchre, whereas he was alive." While he was thus in hiding he finally mastered the principles of Christian Science. "The lonely precincts of the tomb gave Jesus a refuge from his foes, a place in which to solve the great problem of being . . . (there) he met and mastered on the basis of Christian Science, the power of mind over matter, all the claims of medicine, surgery, and hygiene" (page 44).

As Jesus did not die, he could not rise again; and the Resurrection also is denied or explained away. Mrs. Eddy says, "Paul writes, 'If Christ (Truth) be not

risen, then is our preaching vain.’ That is, if the idea of the supremacy of Spirit, which is the true conception of being, come not to your thought, you cannot be benefited by what I say” (page 324). Really, I do not think St. Paul meant anything of the sort !

All this is a flat contradiction of the New Testament story, but it is made necessary by Mrs. Eddy’s doctrine. There is really no room at all in Christian Science for the Cross and the Atonement. The very idea of the Cross, of One who, though sinless Himself, voluntarily accepted the suffering and death which are the result of human sin, that He might thereby draw all men to Himself, and through Himself to the Father, is repugnant to all that Mrs. Eddy wants to have us believe. She wants us to forget suffering, to disbelieve in it, to put it aside. The idea that God Himself should come down and suffer and die is the very negation of the theory that suffering is an illusion. But it is the heart of Christianity.

Mrs. Eddy uses the word “atonement,” but she gives it a meaning of her own. “Atonement is the exemplification of man’s unity with God” (page 18). “We acknowledge Jesus’ atonement as the evidence of divine efficacious Love, unfolding man’s unity with God through Christ-Jesus, the Way-shower; and we acknowledge that man is saved through Christ, through Truth, Life and Love, as demonstrated by the Galilean Prophet in healing the sick and overcoming sin and death” (page 497). Atonement, of course, really means not showing or revealing man’s already-existing unity with God, as this suggests, but bringing erring, sinful man back again to be *at one* with God. It is a quite unjustifiable use of the word to make it mean anything else. The Christian Science interpretation of the “Atonement” is certainly not to be found in the New Testament. St. Paul said : “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself”—a meaningless statement if, as Mrs. Eddy says, the sin of the world is a “false belief” about which God knows nothing.

Whatever you may think of Christian Science on its own merits, it is clearly not the religion of Christ and the Bible. Every one of Mrs Eddy's distinctive statements is contradicted in the Bible scores of times over.

It is hardly necessary to give illustrations, beyond what I have said already, but many familiar texts will rise to your mind.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. i. 1).

"Thus saith the Lord, I have made the earth, and created man upon it" (Isa. xlv. 12).

"The Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . All things were made by Him. . . ." (St. John i. 3).

"While we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8).

"Who His own self bare our sins in His body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24).

"Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh . . ." (1 Pet. iv. 1).

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. . . ." (1 John i. 8).

How is it possible to maintain that this doctrine of the unreality of matter, sin and suffering is Christian, or is founded on the Bible? Yet Mrs. Eddy does so. "The Bible has been my only authority," she says (page 126). However, she remarks elsewhere, "The literal rendering of the Scriptures makes them nothing valuable, but often is the foundation of unbelief and hopelessness. The metaphysical rendering is health and peace and hope for all" ("Miscellaneous Writings," page 169). She admits, then, that it is not to be found in the literal rendering! We have already seen a few specimens of "metaphysical rendering"; here are one or two more:

"The word Adam is from the Hebrew *adamah*, signifying the red colour of the ground, dust, nothingness. Divide the word Adam into two syllables, and then it reads *a dam*, or obstruction. This suggests the thought of something fluid, of mortal mind in solution. It

further suggests the thought of that darkness upon the face of the deep when matter or dust was deemed the agent of Deity in creating man—when matter, as that which is accursed, stood opposed to Spirit" (page 338). " (Genesis i. 10.) 'And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas; and God saw that it was good.' Here the human concept and divine idea seem confused by the translator, but they are not so in the scientifically Christian meaning of the text. . . . In metaphor the *dry land* illustrates the absolute formation instituted by Mind. . . ." (page 506).

(In the Glossary.) "GAD. Science, Spiritual Being understood, haste towards harmony." "GIHON (river). The rights of woman acknowledged morally, civilly, and socially," etc.

Many similar examples might be given. It is difficult to believe that anyone can take them seriously; and it is obvious that by such methods of "interpretation" anything can be made to mean anything the teacher wishes it to mean!

I have taken you rapidly, but I believe truthfully and carefully, through the chief doctrines of Christian Science. The quotations which I have given from Mrs. Eddy's book are quite typical; I have not torn them from their context in order to misrepresent their meaning, or, I hope, in any way been guilty of exaggeration. We have seen that its philosophy is nothing but a confused muddle, and that it is certainly not in any accepted sense of the term Christian; nor can it for a moment substantiate the claim that it is based on the Bible. Yet it obviously possesses an attraction for a number of people, who sincerely believe that in following its teaching they have found the way to health and happiness. What are we to make of it?

We can only estimate it properly when we realise that it is simply one example—the most extreme—of a whole group of "mind-cure" movements which arose,

chiefly in the United States, in the latter part of the nineteenth century. "Christian Science," "Divine Healing," "Mental Science," "New Thought"—there are many sects, but they all have a great deal in common, and are part of a general tendency which Professor William James called "the Religion of Healthy-mindedness."* By "healthy-mindedness" is meant "the tendency which looks on all things and finds them good." It is an attitude which is natural and spontaneous in some people. They have "a temperament organically weighted on the side of cheer and fatally forbidden to linger over the darker aspects of the universe." Professor James quotes the American poet, Walt Whitman, as a well-known example of this type of mind. His poems "end by persuading the reader that men and women, life and death, and all things are divinely good." Sadness, suffering, and consciousness of sin simply had no place in his scheme of things. Most people are familiar with his lines:

"I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contained.

I stand and look at them long and long ;

They do not sweat and whine about their condition.

They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins."

Such "natural optimists" occur in every age. Their religion is from the outset one of union with the divine, and its note is unaffected gladness.

"Healthy-mindedness" of this kind is purely spontaneous and involuntary, but it may be deliberately cultivated. It is possible to adopt a definitely optimistic attitude towards life as a conscious policy, systematically ignoring evil and melancholy and insisting that all is for the best in the best of possible worlds. The period which I have mentioned saw a great outburst of this "systematic cultivation of healthy-mindedness." Partly, perhaps, it was a reaction from the morbid hell-fire theology of the old Puritanism;

* "The Varieties of Religious Experience," Lectures IV. and V.

partly it was the result of popular science and increasing material prosperity. It showed itself in many directions, but its most striking development is in the various branches of the Mind-cure movement. “There are various sects of this ‘New Thought,’ to use another of the names by which it calls itself,” writes Professor James, “but their agreements are so profound that their differences may be neglected.” “It is a deliberately optimistic scheme of life, with both a speculative and a practical side.” “The most characteristic feature . . . is an intuitive belief in the all-saving power of healthy-minded attitudes as such, in the conquering efficacy of courage, hope, and trust, and a correlative contempt for doubt, fear, worry, and all nervously precautionary states of mind.”

This belief has in general been corroborated by practical experience. By the deliberate adoption of an optimistic or “healthy-minded” attitude many invalids have been cured, and many weak and flabby characters have been strengthened and given new life. “The blind have been made to see, the halt to walk; lifelong invalids have had their health restored. The moral fruits have been no less remarkable. The deliberate adoption of a healthy-minded attitude has proved possible to many who never supposed they had it in them; regeneration of character has gone on on an extensive scale; and cheerfulness has been restored to countless homes.” And although there are, Professor James continues, innumerable failures and self-deceptions mixed up with them, “the plain fact remains that the spread of the movement has been due to its practical fruits.”

In the view of the prophets of this movement the essential human vice to be avoided is *fear*. Fear of disease, of bad weather, of accidents, of the loss of property, of the chance of robbery, of fire, of war, and, crowning all, the fear of death—these, they say, are the things which cramp and limit human life and injure both body and mind. “Man often has fear

stamped upon him before his entrance into the outer world; he is reared in fear; all his life is passed in bondage to fear of disease and death; and thus his whole mentality becomes cramped, limited, and depressed, and his body follows its shrunken pattern and specification.”* Get rid of this weight of fear and anxiety, and both body and mind will be free to achieve boundless possibilities. Your thoughts, they say, are the forces which mould your life; and if your thoughts are of health, youth, vigour, and success, before you know it these things will also be your outward portion.

Man, it is declared, is already one with the infinite Divine Life and Power, an inexhaustible source of strength, health, and success, which may be drawn upon by those who will. “The great central fact of the universe is that spirit of infinite life and power that is back of all, that manifests itself in and through all. This spirit of infinite life and power is what I call God. He is the life of our life, our very life itself. We are partakers of the life of God; and though we differ from Him in that we are individualised spirits while He is the Infinite spirit, including us as well as all else beside, yet in essence the life of God and the life of man are identically the same, and so are one. The great central fact in human life is the coming into a conscious vital realisation of our oneness with this Infinite Life, and the opening of ourselves fully to this divine inflow. In just the degree in which you realise your oneness with the Infinite Spirit you will exchange dis-ease for ease, inharmony for harmony, suffering and pain for abounding health and strength.”†

The way to achieve this sense of oneness with the Infinite and to tap this source of power is by relaxing the strain of your individual effort, by “letting go,” by “giving your little private self a rest and finding that a greater Self is there.” You must practise meditation

* H. Wood, “Ideal Suggestion through Mental Photography,” quoted by James.

† R. W. Trine, “In Tune with the Infinite,” quoted by James.

and concentration of thought, and habitually recollect the presence of the Infinite Spirit. “The time will come when in the busy office or on the noisy street you can enter into the silence by simply drawing the mantle of your thoughts about you and realising that there and everywhere the Spirit of Infinite Life, Love, Wisdom, Peace, Power, and Plenty is guiding, keeping, protecting, leading you.” “Whenever the thought is not occupied with one’s daily duty or profession, it should be sent aloft into the spiritual atmosphere. There are quiet leisure moments by day and wakeful hours at night when this wholesome and delightful exercise may be engaged in to great advantage. At such favourable seasons . . . the ego gradually becomes conscious that it is face to face with the Divine Presence—that mighty, healing, loving, Fatherly life which is nearer to us than we are to ourselves.”*

Now although in many directions this “New Thought” is shallow and inadequate, and its conception of God is pantheistic rather than Christian, yet there is a great deal in it that is true and valuable and in accord with the real teaching of Christianity. It recalls immediately our Lord’s words about not being anxious, about faith and trust in the heavenly Father. Its practice of meditation is identical with the “Practice of the Presence of God” advocated by the Christian Saints. It seems sad that so many people have had to find in Mind-cure what they should have been able to find in the Christian Church—and have thereby, I venture to say, missed the finer and nobler aspirations which belong to those who know Christ as their Lord—yet the fact that they have done so is a reflection on much of our conventional Christianity. Indeed, with all the faults and exaggerations which we can see in the Mind-cure movement, we have to be grateful to it for reminding us of aspects of the Christian Gospel which were in danger of being forgotten. In a later lecture

* H. Wood, “Ideal Suggestion,” etc., quoted by James.

we shall see how we may apply these lessons to our own religion.

It is obvious that Christian Science, with its refusal even to admit the fact of evil and its insistence that God is All, and that all is good, is an example of this movement. It directs the thoughts to health and well-being. It declares that evil and disease are lies, and that anyone who speaks of them is a liar. It surrounds itself with an atmosphere of cheerfulness—the very furnishings and decoration of its churches and reading-rooms are always bright and pleasant. Thus we may readily appreciate the attraction which it has, and we willingly agree that in common with the other Mind-cure movements it probably often does cure, or help to cure, disease, and lead to an increase in cheerfulness and freedom from worry which may be a great gain to some people.

The chief difference between Christian Science and the other types of Mind-cure, is that the latter are mostly content to urge an optimistic outlook on life, without trying to form a systematic philosophy. They direct us to ignore evil, and concentrate on the thought of good; they do not try to account for the existence of evil, or to explain it in any way. Christian Science, on the other hand, as we have seen, has provided itself with a system of "metaphysics," in which it roundly denies the very existence of matter and evil.* This may actually account, in part, for its popularity being so much greater than that of its rivals, for, to those who cannot detect its fallacies, it gives so much more point and force to the direction to ignore evil and disease, and leads to a much more radical and thorough-going attitude towards the ills of life. But this very point of difference it is which must be weighed against the practical good that in some cases it no doubt does,

* Mrs. Eddy herself states the difference clearly: "Other systems of mental healing admit that there is disease to be cured. Christian Science says there *is no* disease."

for its philosophy is so irrational, and it is applied in so uncritical and extreme a fashion, that the net result, we are forced to conclude, is to do more harm than good. Let me summarise my reasons for saying this.

1. The fact that it is so thoroughly irrational means that it must damage intelligence, for anyone who is to accept the doctrines of Christian Science about the non-existence of matter and that illusive nonentity “mortal mind” must give up logical thinking altogether. To regard the plain evidence of the senses as errors and illusions must lead to the disparagement of all ordinary learning and science. Mrs. Eddy says, “There is no physical science. . . . Christian science eschews what is called Natural Science” (page 127). “The so-called laws of matter are nothing but false beliefs” (page 121)—and so on. If this attitude were really carried out, there would be an end to all progress of knowledge.

2. The constant effort to believe something which certainly is not true must also in the end damage character; and an example of this unfortunate tendency of Christian Science on its adherents is seen in the extremely unreliable evidence put forward as to cures. Cures are constantly claimed where, in fact, no cure whatever has taken place, and the patient is just as bad as before.* After a prolonged effort to think on Christian Science lines it no doubt becomes impossible to distinguish fact from fancy, and we may willingly absolve its devotees from any charge of intentional dishonesty. Nevertheless, it cannot be good for people to think a thing is true just because they say so.

3. The complete repudiation of ordinary medical treatment causes much unnecessary suffering and loss of life. Dr. Stephen Paget, in his book “The Faith and Works of Christian Science,” deals very faithfully with this aspect of it, and especially with the cruelty it involves towards children and dependents. I need say no more under this head here, as we shall discuss it more fully later on.

* *Vide* Lecture IV.

4. There is surely great danger in the confusion between disease and sin. These are constantly bracketed together as "errors" or "false beliefs," though, as I have said already, it is difficult to determine exactly what Mrs. Eddy does mean by saying that sin is a "belief," or whether she really makes no distinction between physical and moral evil. If the latter is the case, are envy, hatred, and malice on the same level as mumps? Is a lie or an act of cruelty, like a cold in the head, a mere delusion? This might lead to the taking of a very light view of sin indeed. The actual tendency, however, seems to be in the opposite direction—to make disease into a sin. Mrs. Eddy writes, "Sickness is no less a temptation than is sin" (page 450); and in certain cases this view causes great distress of mind to a patient. Very often when a sufferer has been cured by Christian Science, the cure proves to be only temporary, and the disease presently reasserts itself, and refuses to yield to further mental treatment. Such patients often look on this as a moral failure, feeling that it is their fault for admitting that they are ill, and are greatly distressed in consequence.

5. A still more objectionable feature is the suggestion that disease may be caused or aggravated by the "mortal belief" not only of the sufferer himself, but of friends or medical attendants. Mrs. Eddy says, "The doctor's mind reaches that of his patient. The doctor should suppress his fear of disease, else his belief in its reality and fatality will harm his patients even more than his calomel and morphine" (page 197). "If patients sometimes seem worse while reading this book ['Science and Health'] the change may either arise from the alarm of the physician . . ." There is, of course, a small measure of truth in this—and a good doctor always does appear cheerful and endeavour to allay the fears of his patient—but stated in this crude way, this theory of a baleful influence of mind on mind is very mischievous. Mrs. Eddy calls this harmful influence "mental malpractice." "All mental mal-

practice arises from ignorance or malice aforethought. It is the injurious action of one mortal mind controlling another from wrong motives . . . [it] tends to blast moral sense, health, and the human life" (page 451). In the early days of Christian Science, at any rate, this belief in "Malicious Animal Magnetism" as it was also called, was a very real terror. Georgine Milmine, in her "Life of Mrs. Eddy," relates how the founder herself certainly feared it. When the unfortunate Mr. Eddy fell ill in the year 1882 his wife was convinced that it was from "arsenical poisoning mentally administered" by a Mr. Arens, an enemy. He died, and the doctor stated that it was due to extreme valvular disease of the heart, and even, it is said, took out the heart to convince her. She refused to alter her opinion, and declared in an interview, "My husband's death was caused by malicious mesmerism. I know it was poison that killed him, not material poison, but mesmeric poison." Milmine gives many other instances of Mrs. Eddy's firm belief in the power of the mind to bring disease upon another; and it is said that she deposed many of her lieutenants on the charge of exerting this power against her. For years a part of the *Christian Science Journal* was devoted to this subject, and Chapter V. of "Science and Health" is called "Animal Magnetism Unmasked." Such notions are precisely similar to the crude superstitions and belief in witchcraft of savage tribes, which are the source of untold fear and misery.

6. An even greater objection is that the theory that suffering is an illusion means the drying-up of sympathy towards others. You cannot feel for the troubles of another when you hold that they are only illusions produced by "mortal mind." And it certainly does not lead to the giving of practical help. In spite of the considerable wealth of Christian Scientists—and we are told that Christian Science produces material prosperity as well as bodily health—we have yet to hear of any corporate efforts of the Christian Science Church

to undertake social work, to alleviate poverty and distress, to mitigate social evils, to abolish slums. As far as I can ascertain, not a penny of the large collections taken at Christian Science services is given to outside charitable objects. In this connection, one can hardly avoid commenting on the fact that the whole movement is run on, shall we say, "sound business lines." Mrs. Eddy's book, *e.g.*, was published at a minimum price of 12s. 6d., although, in such large numbers, it can only cost a shilling or two to produce.

The average Christian Science congregation consists almost entirely of fairly well-to-do people in a comfortable station in life; and, frankly, it seems to come very near to callous hypocrisy for such to say that suffering and disease are unreal. They would not find much support for that view in an East End slum; you are not very likely to believe that matter is unreal and mind is all when you don't know where your next meal is coming from. It may sound all right to say there is no disease to a lady of independent means suffering from neurasthenia, but it is a different thing to say it to a child whose life is ruined by syphilis through the sins of his parents. No doubt such things are not nice subjects to think about, and it would be much pleasanter to convince ourselves that they are not real—but they are real, and it is surely a very selfish policy for comfortably-off people to pretend that they are not.

Besides such objections as these there is the still more important and serious one, which we have already discussed—and of which we shall have more to say in the next lecture—that its teaching about God and our Lord Jesus Christ is extremely vague and inadequate. Thus, while we may gladly recognise the increase of health and cheerfulness which it may bring to some people, and the earnestness and sincerity of many of its members, we cannot but conclude that Christian Science as a whole is a very foolish and regrettable movement.

III. MATTER AND SPIRIT: AND THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

OUR task is now to see, if we can, what is the true Christian teaching on the subjects with which the theories of "Christian Science" attempt to deal. What is the relation between matter and spirit, body and soul? What is the Christian view of evil and suffering? But first I think we had better touch on a point which is fundamental to our discussion, though it would take us far beyond the limits of these lectures if we tried to deal with it adequately. What do we mean by the words "real" and "reality"? It is surely rather important to define this before making such statements as that "matter is not real," or that "God is the only reality." Now, without trying to go deeply into philosophical discussions, let us notice that it is possible to use the words in two different senses.

By Reality we may mean that which is permanent and unchanging, as opposed to the temporary and changing phenomena of our universe. Most philosophers hold that, transcending the space and time which hedge in all of which we are aware through our senses, there must be some ultimate unchanging Reality. It is what is termed the Absolute. To Christians, of course, this absolute ultimate existence is God. If by "Reality" is meant this ultimate Reality, it is quite correct to say that only God is Real.

But we also use the word "real" in another sense, meaning that which *in* the universe of space and time of which we are aware through our senses, actually exists, as opposed to what we should call the imaginary. This, of course, is the sense in which we ordinarily employ the word in everyday use. We say, *e.g.*, that what we do in our waking life is real as opposed to our dreams. If we did not make such distinctions we should soon get

into hopeless difficulties. Mrs. Eddy, apparently, would not have us make such a distinction. "Mortal existence is a dream of pain and pleasure," she writes, "and it is like the dream we have in sleep, in which everyone recognises his condition to be wholly a state of mind" (page 188). "Mortals are no more material in their waking hours than when they act, walk, see, hear, enjoy, or suffer in dreams" (page 397). I do not think that the most fervent Christian Scientist could actually base his conduct on this view. What, *e.g.*, would happen if, having dreamed that you had paid your Income Tax, you refused to pay it when awake, on the ground that there was just as much, or as little, reality in the former as the latter? It sounds rather an attractive idea, but I fear the Income Tax man would not see the point. But I suppose he would be under the influence of "mortal mind"! The mere fact that only by recognising that some things in this universe are real and that others are imaginary can we get along at all, is sufficient proof that the word "real" can be applied to the things which we perceive through the senses.

This does not mean that the two kinds of Reality are of the same order. There is the ultimate Reality, transcending space and time, which we cannot experience through our senses, but the existence of which reason causes philosophers to postulate. And there is what we may call the relative reality which we experience through our senses in space and time.

Now, where we join issue with Mrs. Eddy is that she refuses to apply the term "reality" to the latter at all, and insists that it has no kind of relation to the ultimate Reality, or God. What we conceive the relation between the two to be we shall try to see in a moment. Knowing nothing of philosophy, Mrs. Eddy is unable to suggest what this relation may be, and she tries to get out of the difficulty by sweeping away the lower order of reality altogether as an illusion. This high-handed method is quite unjustifiable. Any philosophy that is worth attention must try to embrace *all* the facts of

experience. It is absurd to form a philosophical theory of the universe, and then to dismiss as illusions all the awkward facts which do not happen to fit in with it.

The error of Christian Science is not unlike the opposite error of the materialist. He insists that what we call *matter* is the only Reality. The atoms and electrons of which physicists tell us that matter is composed are, according to him, the ultimate basis of all existence. By the chance combination of these our universe has been built up; life, and even mind, are only the results of exceedingly complicated chemical reactions. When these reactions break down, then life and mind immediately cease. It is only under certain conditions (of temperature, moisture, atmosphere, etc.) that such reactions are possible, and it is conceivable that these conditions would so change, that life and mind would become extinct altogether, and the universe would then go on—as it did before life and mind appeared—quite unintelligent and dead.

Such a view assumes that mind is of no significance and importance; it is merely an accidental by-product of physical and chemical processes; its sensations of will and purpose are mere illusions, for the actual course of events is inevitably fixed by the physical laws of the universe, and mind is powerless to influence them. The fallacy is that it dismisses as illusory and of no significance the sensations of will and purpose which are the things of which we are most immediately aware. We are conscious of our own minds far more immediately and intimately than we are of the external world. It is these minds which are able to frame theories about atoms and electrons, and it is absurd to hold that they are only a sort of unimportant by-product of the things about which they can theorise. The materialistic view of the universe simply leaves out of account the most significant thing in the universe, namely mind.

It is, perhaps, doubtful whether any serious thinker holds a crude materialism like this nowadays, but it

was popular in the latter part of the last century, when men's heads were rather turned by the wonderful discoveries of Natural Science; and, carried away by their enthusiasm, they thought that the methods of Natural Science would soon be able to give a complete explanation of everything. But since the ideas of the man-in-the-street are generally about half a century behind those of the intellectual world, materialism is thought by many people today to be the last word in philosophy; and Natural Science is supposed to have knocked the final nail in the coffin of religion.

This is not the place to discuss the current philosophy of many scientists. It is not necessarily at all a Christian one, but it has certainly moved away from a purely material to a more spiritual interpretation of the universe. That is certainly a gain from the Christian point of view, and I am confident that in another generation or so, when all these modern discoveries have had time to settle down, most thinking people will again come to see that the Christian interpretation of the universe is the only satisfactory one.

In so far as it is a reaction from a materialistic outlook on life, Christian Science is on the right side; but it states the opposite view that Mind or Spirit, and not matter, is the ultimate Reality, in such a crude way as to raise far more difficulties than it solves.

The view that mind, and not matter, is the fundamental "principle" of the universe may be loosely termed Idealism, and in some form or other it is the philosophical basis of all the great religions. Matter is then regarded as the creation of Mind. If Christian Science merely insisted on the supremacy of mind and the subordinate nature of matter it would be quite right; but unfortunately it insists that the two are quite opposed to one another, and holds that there can be no connection between them. And in order to avoid the conclusion that there are two independent "principles" in the universe (a view that runs counter to the strong

intuition of nearly all those who try to think about these things, that everything must ultimately be reducible to a unity), it declares that matter does not exist at all!

It is, we may notice in passing, no new idea that matter and spirit are alien and opposed to one another. It was the foundation of many of the heresies of the early days of Christianity, though it was worked out by them in a more logical way than it is by Christian Science. It led usually to one of two results—either to extreme asceticism which repudiated every kind of “fleshly” joy or pleasure, and tried to reduce dependence on material things to an absolute minimum: or to complete lawlessness and license with regard to fleshly things, on the ground that matter and spirit being utterly apart, what you did with your body could not possibly affect your soul!

Now let us see what is the Christian teaching on these difficult questions. Christianity is *Theistic*; that is, it declares that the ultimate Reality is of the nature of Mind or Spirit, a conscious, purposive, intelligent Being, whom it does not hesitate to speak of in personal terms and call God. Let me repeat what I said last time: that we quite realise how inadequate is the word “Personal”; we mean something infinitely higher and greater than any personality we can conceive, but Personal *is* the highest word we have, and so we use it in preference to any other. God, the ultimate Reality, must be much *more* than Personal, but He cannot be less.

We further believe that this ultimate Reality whom we call God *wills* to express Himself through what we termed the “relative” reality of our universe. That is the creation, the self-expression, of God, just as a great picture, to use an imperfect analogy, is the self-expression of an artist. This created universe is both material and spiritual. It contains what we call “dead” matter; it contains life—lowly unconscious forms in which the life-force manifests itself by a blind impulse to self-preservation and reproduction—higher forms of *conscious*

life, culminating in the *self*-conscious life of man, capable of appreciating abstract spiritual qualities, in what we term mind and spirit.

Natural Science has shown us that all these different stages did not come into being simultaneously, but as the result of a process which has taken an enormously long time. Neither does an artist produce a finished picture in an instant. The essential point is that all proceed from, are the expression of, are created by the ultimate Reality, God.

This is the Christian way of thinking of the material universe, not as something alien and opposed to the spiritual, to God, but as something deliberately brought into being to *express* the *spiritual*. It is what may be termed the *sacramental* view of the universe. In the definition of the Church Catechism, a sacrament is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." It is a definition which has a much wider application than to the two sacraments of the Church. A great picture—materially it is nothing but canvas and paint, but it expresses something spiritual, beauty. It is a sacrament. A noble and unselfish action—you might give a complete physical description of it, every movement of the doer's body, every material change produced, but there would still be something else, the love which it expresses. It is a sacrament. These outward visible things are expressions of eternal spiritual verities, and reveal them to us. In Professor Nairne's words, "Where things visible reach out into the Eternal and carry us with them upwards, there is a sacrament." So the universe as a whole is a sacrament, an expression of the beauty and power and goodness of God.

It is a familiar thought that Nature speaks of God. Mrs. Eddy in a moment of forgetfulness cannot escape it, for she says that "arctic regions, sunny tropics, giant hills, winged winds, mighty billows, verdant dales, festive flowers, and glorious heavens" all point to the invisible Intelligence they reflect; and again, "all Nature teaches God's love to man," though such state-

ments completely contradict the theory that the giant hills and mighty billows are but false beliefs of our "mortal minds."

The sacramental view of the universe must be distinguished from Pantheism. Pantheism means the belief that God is "in" all things, in much the same way that our souls during this life are "in" our bodies. By it God is conceived, as it were, as the Soul of the universe, inhabiting every part of it equally, co-extensive with it, inseparable from it. That is, for example, an underlying idea in Hinduism, but it is not the Christian view. We think of God as existing Himself, apart from, "outside," the universe; but as having created the universe in order to express Himself.

We do not think of everything as equally expressing God. Although he reveals Himself partly in Nature, it is only in man, whom He has created with a spirit, finite and limited though it is, akin to Himself, that he could express Himself perfectly. And we believe that so He has done; that in one Man, Jesus, the Divine Reality has completely expressed Himself. In Jesus the Word became flesh, God became Man.

How could anyone who has once grasped that wonderful thought ever get tangled up in this confusion about matter and spirit? Of course matter and human flesh must be real and God-created, if God could use them for such a purpose. This is the central truth of Christianity, let us make no mistake about that. Everything that is distinctively Christian goes if belief in the full reality of the Incarnation—God coming *into* human *flesh*—is weakened. St. John knew that. The earliest heretics whom the Church had to meet were the Gnostics, who boggled at the material side of the Incarnation, and could not endure the thought that God had anything to do with so gross a thing as a human body. This view had arisen even before the death of the last of those who had known Jesus in the flesh, and we find St. John warning his readers in the strongest manner:

“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit which confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist” (1 John iv. 2-3).

It is difficult to see how Christian Scientists can evade the plain meaning of these words. It would seem that they could only be met by a flat denial.

The Gnostic view that matter is evil and that there is something alien and incompatible between it and spirit, and that therefore Jesus could not have been both real man and God, is, in another form, just the error of Christian Scientists. It strikes at the root of Christianity, because Christianity is a religion for the whole of life. It does not tell us that our bodies are evil and that we must get rid of them before we can serve God properly. It bids us serve God with our whole selves, body as well as spirit; and it assures us that we can do so because God Himself assumed human flesh. If Jesus was not in the fullest sense God become man, then we lose both the certainty that we know what God is like, and the faith that with His help we can devote our whole selves to His service, and make the whole of human life the thing that God would have it be.

All our Christian belief in the worth and dignity of man, in the value of every human life in the sight of God, in the brotherhood of races and classes, really depends at rock bottom on the belief that God Himself took human flesh. It has taken many centuries of Christianity to work out fully these implications of the Incarnation, and it would be a disaster if, having arrived at them, we were to try and kick away the ladder by which we have mounted to them, and which will, no doubt, take us higher still. It is an easily observed fact that when once the full Christian belief has been shaken, we soon find Christian ethics and moral values being questioned. A generation or so ago men like Huxley thought that they could throw over the Chris-

tian beliefs, but keep Christian morals. They could, because they had been brought up and formed their moral ideas under the influence of Christianity. But now in the next generation we find the Christian moral code being frankly and openly repudiated.

We have wandered a little way from our immediate point, but it is important to realise how essential the full belief in the Incarnation is to the Christian view of life. And this belief Christian Science, with its theory that the flesh is an illusion and that Christ is an impersonal principle of Divine Truth, certainly does destroy. In the Incarnation we have what we may call the supreme Sacrament, the fact which sets the keystone to the Christian view of the relation between matter and spirit. For once and all it reveals matter, the flesh, not as hostile to spirit, but as its servant and vehicle.

It is the glory of Christianity that it brings together two sides of truth and shows that both combine in a higher truth. A great preacher of the last century, F. W. Robertson of Brighton, said, "All grand truth is the statement of two opposites, not a *via media* between them, nor either of them alone." Little-minded people often seize upon one side of truth only, and then state it as if it were the whole. If we are to be Christians, we must be wide-minded. We must see that truths which narrow minds think are opposed are really complementary. So it is with what to the narrow minds, the minds which work along a single groove, appears to be the antithesis between spirit and matter. "Matter is the only reality," says the materialist. "Spirit alone is real, matter a delusion and evil," cries the crude idealist, whether he be an early Christian heretic, or an Eastern philosopher, or a Christian Scientist. "Both are real and good and God-created," replies the Christian, "and in the Incarnation we see them united on the highest plane; we see how the material may be used as the servant of the spiritual."

But we saw that the Christian Science theory of the unreality of matter sprang from the desire to explain away evil and disease. If we hold that it is not an illusion, that ultimately everything which exists depends upon God, what are we to say about evil and suffering? Do these, too, come from God, and if so how can God be love?

This is the problem which has vexed all minds since men first believed that God must be good. Unless we hold that God is good, there is, of course, no problem. The Hindu who thinks of God as equally in all things, in the tiger as in man, in the sinner as in the saint, is not troubled by it, for to him God is neither good nor evil. It is only when we reach the grand belief that God is good that the problem of evil becomes acute.

We can see the problem gradually taking shape in men's minds in the Old Testament. As religion developed from the tribal stage, and men gradually replaced their conception of a petty tribal deity, acting in an arbitrary manner like some human king or sultan, with the wonderful thought of an omnipotent and good God, so they felt more and more the problem of the suffering and injustice in the world. The Book of Job is the classical expression of it; and we find it again and again in the Psalms, with their constant reiteration of the prayer that God will reward the good and repay the wicked according to their deserts.

Let us notice that Christianity at least does not shirk the problem. It frankly admits the existence of evil; it accepts the facts of the world and faces up to them, while yet holding to the faith that God is good. The religions of the East admit the facts, but give way to fatalism or pessimism. "It is the will of Allah," says the Mohammedan, and bows his head in hopeless submission to his arbitrary Deity. "All life and desire is evil," says the Buddhist; "the only course is to seek release from the chain of existence" in virtual extinction.

In the West, on the other hand, many refuse to admit the facts. Before the Great War, at all events, there

was current a sort of cheerful optimism, which minimised the evil of the world, and held that we were naturally evolving out of it, that a few more centuries of education and liberal legislation would bring heaven on earth. The War was enough to kill that in the minds of most of those who held it.

“Christian Science” goes still further, and attempts to make a clean sweep of the facts by dubbing all evil illusion. We have already seen the impossibility of such an attempt.

Christianity alone admits the full gravity of the facts, and yet rings out its challenging faith that in spite of all, there is a loving God. Is that faith a mere paradox, or can we see any light in this dark problem of the suffering of the world?

I believe that we can, though we might well hesitate to embark on a discussion in so small a space as this. I can only suggest the lines of thought which seem to me personally to be helpful.

But before I do so, there is a point which it will be convenient to mention here. Pain itself is not an evil, but a physiological necessity. It is a signal that something is wrong and a warning to put it right. In fact, if there were no pain of any kind, life probably could not survive at all. If it did not hurt you to touch a red-hot poker, there would be nothing to induce you to take your hand immediately away, and it would be badly damaged before you realised that anything was wrong. Some of the deadliest diseases are those, such as some forms of cancer, which in their early stages cause no pain, and so give no indication of their presence till it is too late. This is a very important point to remember when we are considering “Christian Science,” with its declarations that “there is no pain,” and that “matter cannot feel.” It would be a very serious thing for us if that were really true, and in point of fact, of course, no Christian Scientist can attempt to carry out such a belief consistently. If he

did, and persistently ignored all the indications which his nervous system gave him, in the form of sensations of pain, when he was placing his body in danger, he would very soon come to a sudden end.

Moreover, we all feel that the achievement of some object through pains and difficulties is worth while. A climber who has reached the top of a mountain after a painful and toilsome ascent experiences a satisfaction which could not be felt by one who had been deposited on the mountain-top by a balloon, with no trouble or difficulty to himself. A world in which there was no pain or travail to be overcome would be a very dull world indeed.

The problem, in fact, lies not in the existence of suffering, but in the seeming uselessness and injustice of so much of the suffering in the world.

But terrible though is the amount of suffering in the world, we ought not to exaggerate it. The theory of biological evolution and Darwin's revelation of Nature as an incessant battleground—his doctrine of the struggle for existence and survival of the fittest—came as a great shock to the mind of the nineteenth century. Huxley said that he could imagine no sadder story than the history of sentient life on the earth; and Tennyson summed up the feeling in the famous phrase "Nature red in tooth and claw"; but although the seeming cruelty and ruthlessness of Nature does present us with a great problem, in thinking of the suffering of the lower animals we must beware of attributing to them the range of thought and sensation which, to the best of our observation, is peculiar to man. After all, what makes human suffering so terrible is very largely the qualities of self-consciousness, sympathy, and anticipation. But there is no reason to suppose that the lower animals possess these powers to anything like the same extent.

We shall not attempt by such argument as this to minimise the difficulties; nevertheless, it is easy to exaggerate them, and to over-stress the cruelty of

Nature ; whereas an impartial observation of the birds and wild creatures conveys the impression that on the whole their existence is happy. It is perfectly true that death is always lurking round the corner ; but it is rare to see animals in the natural state suffering greatly from disease ; death when it comes, as it must come to all living creatures, is usually swift, and we have no reason to suppose that they are troubled with the morbid fears and anxieties which make that so terrible a prospect to many humans.

But while the suffering of Nature must not be exaggerated, it remains a hard problem for us to understand why the upward development of life had to be at the cost of so much individual pain. Perhaps there is a hint in those strange words of St. Paul's in the eighth chapter of Romans, with their bold flight of faith which sees in the suffering of Nature the "birth-pangs of immortality." "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."

At least, if we believe in the unity of Nature, we must believe that the suffering of the other creatures is in some way bound up with the suffering of man ; and on the problem of human suffering there does seem to be some light if we believe in the reality of Free-will.

The Christian faith, and indeed any belief in morality, demands that men should possess at least some measure of Free-will, a real power of choosing between good and evil. Most ordinary people if asked whether they believed themselves to possess such a power of choice, would, I am sure, unhesitatingly answer, "Yes." Of course, the power is not unlimited ; it is restricted by all sorts of influences, by heredity and

environment, and so on; but except to one who has become a complete slave to habit (and habits are only the cumulative result of choices exercised in the past) it is a reality. Unless there were such a power of choosing, there could be no human goodness. A machine cannot be moral. As Dr. Dearnèr puts it, you can force a motor-car to go; but you do not say that it goes out of kindness of its heart, because it is such a nice good motor-car. God does not want us to be machines, because if we were we should not be either good or bad. We could not, then, be good. Everything we did that seemed good would only be because we could not help it. A celebrated agnostic writer discussing this point, who declared, "I protest that if some great Power would agree to make me think always what is true and do what is right on condition of being turned into a sort of clock, I should instantly close with the offer,"* was missing the point altogether. Such mechanical goodness would not be goodness. Real goodness must be free, and that means that if there is to be a possibility of goodness on the part of created beings, there must, in fact, be a possibility of evil. That does not mean that God *created* evil, but he had to make it *possible* if there was also to be a possibility of good.

Men have often chosen the evil, and that evil choice brings suffering. The tragedy is that so often it brings suffering on others who are innocent. Yet God cannot prevent that, without taking away the reality of the choice. If every time anyone did wrong he immediately brought punishment on himself, and on himself alone, of course no one would do wrong. The power of choice would be apparent, not real. But more than that, such a provision would make impossible the finest capacities of the human spirit. Let me quote a paragraph from Canon Peter Green:

"At a dinner-hour service held in a big munition works during the War, an intelligent-looking middle-

* Huxley, "Collected Essays," vol. i., p 192.

aged man attacked me with great violence for 'daring to stand up in the middle of this awful war and talk about a loving God, a Heavenly Father.' I adopted a reply I often use. I said, 'You're being very severe on God. Well, fancy yourself endowed with omnipotence, and tell us what you would do. You mustn't say you'd not let men sin. For that means taking away their Free-will, and so making spiritual beings into machines. But short of that anything ought to be possible for an Almighty God. So fancy that you are God, and tell us what you'd do in His place.' The man replied, 'Well, there's one thing I'd do. I'd not let anyone suffer for anyone's fault but his own.' 'Oh! Oh!' I cried. 'What a dreadful world! What are you going to do with the mothers? Are they to be quite unaffected when their boys make shipwreck of their lives or their girls come to ruin? Are parents to be quite untouched by the sins of their children, and children to feel no shame or sorrow of the parents? It seems to me that your world would have to be a world without love, a world where mothers, and friends, and lovers, and saints and heroes, and the Cross of Christ would be impossible.'"

In other words, the terrible power of human wrongdoing to inflict suffering on others is an inevitable consequence of the fact that we are "members one of another." The fact which makes possible love and co-operation and service must also, alas! make possible hatred and selfishness and cruelty. In order to make possible the highest and best, God had to take a terrible risk (if it is not irreverent to put it like that), for He had also to make possible the lowest and worst.

Such a belief in the reality of man's Free-will may not seem to explain all the suffering in the world, but it does explain a great deal. Take away all the suffering directly or indirectly due to human sin—war, social injustice, the effects of unchastity, drunkenness, and greed—and the problem would certainly assume much smaller proportions. It seems inevitable, too, that accidents which may involve suffering should occur if

beings in any sense free are allowed to move about in a world necessarily governed by natural laws. If you fall out of a high window you will kill or injure yourself, and God cannot stop it without interfering with His law of gravitation.

But though such considerations may help to satisfy the head, they do not altogether satisfy the heart. They may seem convincing in the study, but when we stand face to face with some terrible example of undeserved suffering, we begin to feel the difficulties again. It is just here that Christianity has its unique contribution to make. God *cares* about the world's suffering; He bears it Himself; for that, in part at least, is the meaning of the Crucifixion. If we believe that Jesus is a real revelation of God—and as I have said already, all that is essential in Christianity stands or falls with that fact—the Cross is not just an isolated incident in history, but a symbol of something which is going on eternally in the heart of God. In the metaphor of the Book of Revelation, Christ is “the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world.” In every act of human cruelty, wickedness, and selfishness which increases the suffering of the race, He is crucified afresh. Mr. Studdert Kennedy puts that thought with his customary force:

“On June 7th, 1917, I was running to our lines half mad with fright. . . . As I ran I stumbled and fell over something. I stopped to see what it was. It was an undersized, underfed German boy, with a wound in his stomach and a hole in his head. I remember muttering, ‘You poor little devil, what had you got to do with it? Not much great blonde Prussian about you.’ Then there came light. It may have been pure imagination, but that does not mean that it was not also reality, for what is called imagination is often the road to reality. It seemed to me that the boy disappeared, and in his place there lay the Christ upon His Cross, and cried, ‘Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these

my little ones, ye have done it unto me.' From that moment I never saw the battlefield as anything but a Crucifix. From that moment I have never seen the world as anything but a Crucifix. I see the Cross set up in every slum, in every filthy over-crowded quarter, in every vulgar flaring street that speaks of luxury and waste of life. I see Him staring up at me from the pages of the newspaper that tells of a tortured, lost, bewildered world."

This belief does not remove the problem of suffering, but it utterly changes its quality. The belief that the God who created us cares, that He suffers with us and for us, makes all the difference to the way in which we face the buffetings of life. But more than that, in giving us the revelation of Himself, He has given us a further assurance, that suffering and evil will be overcome and turned to good. "The Vision of Life in the Cross is not a vision of despair, but of confidence and hope, because behind it there is the empty tomb, and the Figure with wounded hands outstretched to bless, ascending into glory." If, in the light of the Death and Resurrection of Christ, suffering when it comes is willingly accepted and bravely borne with the consciousness that God is bearing it with us, its power to daunt the soul is destroyed. Canon Green quotes a passage from Macaulay's History, an account of the flogging of "Julian" Johnson under James II.: "Three hundred and seventeen stripes were laid on; but the sufferer never winced. He afterwards said that the pain was cruel, but that, as he was dragged at the tail of the cart, he remembered how patiently the Cross had been borne up Mount Calvary, and was so much supported by the thought that, but for the fear of incurring the suspicion of vainglory, he would have sung a psalm with as firm and cheerful a voice as if he had been worshipping God in the congregation."

But still more, the thought of the agony of God can give us power not only to meet and bear the suffering that comes from without, but to conquer the evil within

ourselves. The experience of nineteen centuries of Christians has shown that the vision of suffering love on the Cross is the one thing that can move the human heart alienated from God, and destroy the power of sin over the human will. In that atoning power of the Cross lies our hope of the ultimate victory of the love of God over the evil of the world.

It has not been possible to do more than indicate in the briefest manner the line of thought which, as it seems to me, is the contribution of Christianity to the solution of the problem of suffering. It is no cut-and-dried solution, still less an attempt to minimise the suffering of the world by denying its reality. When all is said there is much that remains dark, and the problem of suffering has well been termed "Faith's greatest obstacle." Yet it is not an insuperable obstacle if we believe in the reality of human Free-will, and the atoning and redeeming power of the Cross. It follows, then, that suffering is not God's *will* for mankind; and that by human co-operation with God the sin of which it is a result may be overcome. Christians are enlisted on the side of God in that fight, and in the strength of Christ, who won the first-fruits of victory on the Cross, they march on, confident that in the end the fight will be won.

IV. MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL HEALING

THE spread of the "Mind-Cure" movements, including "Christian Science," has been due, as we saw in Lecture II., to their practical fruits, and especially to the claim to heal disease. Mrs. Eddy professes in several passages in her writings that bodily healing is the least important part of her system, but there can be no doubt that the hope of physical benefit and the testimony of those who claim to have been cured are the main sources of attraction which the movement possesses. The pages of the Christian Science periodicals, in fact, read rather like advertisements for a patent medicine, and it is the cures which are advanced as proving the truth of the teaching.

It is difficult to form a just estimate of these claims, as in most cases no facilities are given for the reported cures to be examined and tested by a competent medical man. It is well known that amateur diagnosis of disease is frequently mistaken, and that many people believe themselves to possess serious illnesses when there is really little the matter with them. Thus, in many of the cures of serious disease claimed by Christian Science, it must remain doubtful whether the patient really had the disease supposed. In his book, "The Faith and Works of Christian Science," Dr. Stephen Paget examined two hundred consecutive testimonials of healing published in the *Christian Science Sentinel*. The vast majority only refer vaguely to "stomach trouble," "pains in the head," "heart trouble," "lung trouble," and so on. For scientific purposes such testimony is hardly worth the paper on which it is written. As Dr. Paget asks, "What are kidney trouble, lung trouble, heart trouble, liver trouble, and eye trouble? They are not chronic nephritis, phthisis,

valvular disease, cirrhosis, and cataract. Bowel trouble is ordinary constipation; stomach trouble is ordinary indigestion and aversion from food; spinal trouble is ordinary backache." Many of the diseases of which cures are reported are such as naturally get well of themselves with lapse of time.

It is also unfortunately the case that cures are claimed where in fact no cure whatever has taken place, and the patient is just as ill as ever. A well-known example is that of the Earl of Dunmore, who in 1907 published an account of his conversion to Christian Science through his cure from a disease declared by an eminent London surgeon to be incurable. A few weeks later he died from the same disease. It is, I believe, a not unusual occurrence in the last stages of a grave disease for the pain which has accompanied it to cease, and this may lead an untrained observer to think that the illness has been cured, though the doctor knows that it is really the sign of the approaching end. It is very frequent, also, for a patient to make a temporary rally and later on to suffer a relapse. Such apparent or temporary improvements are often claimed as "cures," and nothing is said about the subsequent history of the patient.

But although the claims to heal are greatly exaggerated, and are supported by very little reliable evidence, there is no doubt that Christian Science does produce cures in some cases. This does not prove the truth of its doctrines, for such cures are precisely similar to those obtained by many other methods of mental healing, including not only the other "Mind-Cure" cults to which reference was made in Lecture II., but also scientific mental therapeutics, and the "spiritual healing" which has always been a feature of religion.

That the mind has a great influence on the body is a fact which is now well recognised. At the time when Christian Science and its allied movements first arose that fact was not so clearly understood, and they can be given credit for having helped to call attention to it.

It is now a commonplace, and modern physiology and psychology have taught us a great deal about the intimate connection between the two. We have learnt that almost every action of the body is directly or indirectly controlled by the central nervous system. From the brain and spinal cord an enormous number of amazingly delicate nerve fibres proceed like telegraph wires to every part of the body, conveying messages from the centre to the extremity and from the extremity to the centre. You desire to pick up this book. The desire in your mind reacts in some mysterious way on nerve cells in your brain which send a message along certain nerves to the muscles in your hand and arm. The latter immediately contract, and so perform your purpose. In this case the sending of the message, with its result, is directly under the control of your conscious mind.

But in other cases the process is not so directly under control. Consider, *e.g.*, the act of blushing. A blush of shame or modesty is also caused by some thought or idea in the mind. But that automatically and without any direct control of the conscious mind causes messages to be sent along the nerves to the minute bloodvessels in the skin; these dilate, and the extra quantity of blood which they then contain produces the bashful crimson in the maiden's cheek—if maidens ever are bashful nowadays.

In still other cases the process is even less present to the consciousness. The action of the internal organs, heart, lungs, digestive system, etc., is also controlled by nerves, which are all connected in some way with the central nervous system in the brain and spinal cord. We are quite prepared to find, therefore, that the mind has some influence on them, and that is the case. A man who is always preoccupied and anxious about his business may, as a result, get indigestion. The proper working of the digestive organs depends, among other things, on their receiving a due supply of blood. The mental disturbance may throw out of gear the nerves

which regulate this supply, and so prevent these organs from doing their work. If he becomes happy and free from care, nerves and organs will probably once more function properly.

More striking and direct are the effects produced by what is known as suggestion. Countless illustrations might be given. An irresponsible medical man, fond of practical joking, administered some harmless draught to a wardful of patients, and a moment later rushed back and in mock alarm told them that by mistake he had given them a powerful emetic. In a few minutes a large number of the patients were being unmistakably sick. Anyone who has studied the customs of savage tribes knows how enormously powerful is the working of suggestion on the minds of such people. It is probably sufficient to account for all the supposed effects of magic and witchcraft. An old man has acquired a reputation as a wizard; he performs some hocus-pocus directed at an unfortunate individual who has incurred his displeasure. The latter becomes aware of it, and immediately, such is the power of suggestion, falls sick and perhaps dies. The potency of the wizard is confirmed, and his next victim will be still easier prey. But we need not go to savages to find such instances. Only a few weeks ago I read of two cases in the newspaper. In one of them an old man had been made almost fatally ill by the statement of a gipsy woman that he had been "overlooked" by someone gifted with this reputed power, and he had given her a large sum of money to counteract the "spell."

Such suggestion can, of course, be employed for many purposes. Modern advertising largely depends upon it. We are told in every newspaper and on every hoarding that So-and-so's soap is the best, or that life is not worth living unless we drink Somebody-or-other's beer, until we begin to believe it. Here, however, we are only thinking of its power to affect the body. In that sphere it can both cause sickness, as I have indicated, and produce, or assist to produce, cures. As

a matter of fact, every doctor uses it to some extent. His "bedside manner," his confident suggestion that he knows all about a patient's disease and how to cure it, is in itself one of his most powerful assets. And in some cases suggestion is probably a factor in the effect of the drugs he uses.* Many a patient has been benefited by a "bottle" containing nothing more potent than coloured water.

The degree of suggestibility varies in different people, and in the same people under different circumstances. It has been found that when a subject has been placed in what is known as a hypnotic trance—a sort of artificial sleep which can be induced by certain well-recognised means—his suggestibility is vastly increased. Amazing results have been obtained in experiments of this nature. Subjects in a hypnotic state can be made to do the most extraordinary actions at the bidding of the operator; they can be rendered insensible to pain; physical changes can be produced in their bodies; and there are many authenticated instances in which they have been cured of disease.

Hypnotism with a view to curing disease was first employed in modern times by a Swiss physician named Mesmer about 1778, and the process was for long known after him as Mesmerism. He induced the hypnotic state in his patients by making passes over their bodies, and he formed a theory of a mysterious vital fluid which he called "animal magnetism" which was supposed to be communicated from the operator to the patient, and to effect the cures and other results. I need not say that this theory of a vital fluid has now been abandoned. The subject has been carefully investigated; it has been found that the hypnotic state can be induced by various means, and the cures and other results are attributed to the power of the patient's

* Of course, only in some cases. Mrs. Eddy's assertion that drugs only owe their effects to "mortal mind" is an example of the way in which Christian Science takes a partial truth and states it as if it were the whole.

own mind—a power which is only released, as it were, by the suggestion of the operator.

Modern psychology has shown us that what goes on in our conscious minds is only a very small part of our mental processes. The mind is, to give a simple illustration, like an iceberg, of which only a small fraction is visible, the bulk being hidden below the surface of the water. So “below” our conscious minds there is a vast region which is called the “subconscious.” To a certain extent we all realise this. We are aware, *e.g.*, of the hidden storehouse we call memory, where thoughts lie tucked away till something occurs to bring them up into consciousness. Sometimes our effort to retrieve them fails, and we say that we have “forgotten”; but often in a hypnotic state, or under other peculiar circumstances, the memory returns. It was there all the time in the “subconscious,” but we could not get it out. Or, again, complicated actions, such as those required in walking, when we learn to do them require our careful attention, but presently we do them without consciously thinking of them at all; the subconscious is attending to them. Psychology has shown that the working of this subconscious mind is vastly more complicated and important than we ever supposed, and has a great effect on our behaviour.

Through the nervous system it exercises a large and at present undefined measure of control over the organs and tissues of the body. We have already had a hint of this when we considered the act of blushing, which we saw had a mental origin, and yet was not under the control of consciousness. The sub-conscious appears to be the seat of a vast store of mental energy, and under certain circumstances this energy can be released in an unusual degree, and produce changes in the body which are quite beyond what is normal. A further peculiar feature of this part of the mind is that it is very receptive of suggestion. The conscious mind possesses the critical faculty. If a suggestion is made to it, it examines it, criticises its truth or possibility,

and on rational grounds accepts or rejects it. But the sub-conscious appears, within certain limits, to accept any suggestion it receives, and if possible it acts upon it.

In hypnotic conditions the critical conscious part of the mind is inhibited, and the sub-conscious is brought up to the top as it were, and so can be "got at" by suggestions from outside. But it is not at all necessary, as we have seen, for a person to be hypnotised before he is open to suggestion. Powerful suggestions made to the conscious mind are "passed on" by it to the sub-conscious. Or the suggestion may be made by the person himself, the process known as auto-suggestion, in which his own conscious mind is making the suggestion to his sub-conscious.

All these three methods of suggestion can be used to assist in the curing of disease. Regarded at first with suspicion and hostility by that most conservative of bodies, the orthodox medical profession, and labelled "quackery," they have now come to be accepted as genuine aids to the ordinary methods of medicine. But it must not be supposed that they afford some alternative and quite infallible method of treatment. The results obtained are uncertain and variable; cures are sometimes only transitory, and unless the greatest care is exercised bad effects may be produced on the mentality of the patient. The most successful cures are usually obtained in cases of nervous or functional disorders, where there does not appear to be any organic disease; and it is usually in such cases only that mental methods are employed by orthodox practitioners. It is impossible to assert, however, that the possibility of mental treatment is strictly limited to disorders of this kind, and there is definite evidence that in some cases organic diseases also have been cured or alleviated.

The practice of suggestion under hypnotism has been employed more on the Continent than in England, notably in the hospitals at Nancy and Salpêtrière, in France; and the records of these institutions show

numerous examples of cures, of organic as well as of nervous diseases. But it should be noted that cures do not by any means always take place. There are many patients who do not seem to be benefited at all by these methods of treatment.

There are now many mental specialists who employ direct suggestion without hypnosis. The patient is told over and over again in a monotonous manner that his symptoms are disappearing, that he is getting better, and so on, and cures are regularly obtained in this way. About auto-suggestion I need say little, because the publicity which it received in the Press a few years ago has made it familiar to everyone. The late M. Coué told us to say, you remember, twenty times each morning: "Every day and in every way I get better and better!"

In these known and tested facts of suggestion we have all that is needed to explain the cures wrought by Christian Science. Christian Scientists indignantly deny that they employ suggestion; but the fact that they do not use the word does not mean that they do not employ the thing. As we have seen, they declare that disease is merely an illusion—tell the patient that he is not ill, that "matter cannot feel," that "God is not sick, and God is All," and so on. This is obviously suggestion pure and simple. The assertion that merely by reading the book patients have been made better is very illuminating in this respect, for the incessant repetitions of the main contentions that "matter is not real," that "there is no disease," that "God is All-in-all," and the absence of any real reasoning or consecutive thought to rouse the mind, are precisely parallel to the methods of suggestion employed by an ordinary mental practitioner. A person of uncritical mind would become almost hypnotised by prolonged reading of Mrs. Eddy's wearisome pages—the very state in which suggestion is most potent.

Christian Scientists also make use of auto-suggestion

in their well-known "absent treatment." "Science can heal the sick who are absent from their healers as well as those present, since space is no obstacle to Mind" (page 179). I heard not long ago of a patient who had paid £10 10s. to a healer for a course of treatment. The healer came to the lady's house three times at the same hour and gave the treatment, and then, being called away to America, promised to continue the healing by "absent treatment." At the same hour each day the patient professed to be feeling benefit, although the increasing difference of time as the healer crossed the Atlantic made it extremely improbable that he was actually giving any treatment at that precise moment. It was obviously a case of pure auto-suggestion.

That in a proportion of cases these methods do induce real physical improvements is undoubted, but the results are just as uncertain and limited as in the case of more orthodox methods of suggestion. The cures of which there is most definite evidence are precisely in those cases of nervous and functional disorders in which we should expect to find them. There may be examples here and there of the cure of more deeply-seated disease, but there are certainly far more instances of failure. Every doctor can tell of cases in which he has been called in to put things right after the failure of Christian Science treatment; and in the course of my duties as Chaplain to a great hospital I came across numbers of Christian Scientists who had been forced at last to seek ordinary medical aid.

The tragedy is that this is often done too late. Frequently the process of suggestion is successful in repressing for a time the *symptoms* of a disease without curing the radical trouble. In the last lecture I pointed out that it is necessary to distinguish between pain and the cause of the pain. If pain is suppressed it does not by any means follow that the injury which is causing it is also removed. An anæsthetic or narcotic can dull or eliminate pain while not affecting the real trouble. Suggestion can act as an anæsthetic, and

suggestion under hypnosis has often been employed for that purpose in operations. The patient is hypnotised and told that he cannot feel; and he does not feel, although the surgeon's knife is being used on his body. It was one of the earliest uses made of it before the discovery of chloroform; and it is still, I believe, sometimes employed when for some reason the use of chloroform would be dangerous. In just the same way Christian Science treatment sometimes removes the pain without curing the disease, and this may in some cases be a fatal thing to do. In a case, say, of appendicitis, by telling yourself that there is nothing the matter with you and refusing to admit that you feel pain, you may for a time drive away all the sensations of pain. But the trouble is still there, steadily growing worse; and when at last it proves too strong for the suggestion, and the sufferer is forced to admit his disease, it may then be at such an advanced stage that there is little hope of surgical methods proving successful, although they might have been carried out quite effectively earlier.

Dr. Paget gives examples provided by sixty-eight different doctors of serious or fatal results due to the neglect of disease through reliance on Christian Science, causing an immense amount of unnecessary suffering; and his list could, of course, be indefinitely extended.

But the worst feature of the repudiation of ordinary medical aid is when it is applied to children and dependents. If a responsible adult refuses medical help and relies solely on Mind-cure, and the consequences are fatal, it is, in the slang phrase, "his own funeral." But to impose this on others is a different matter. Mrs. Eddy writes, "That mother is not a Christian Scientist, and her affections need better guidance, who says to her child: 'You look sick,' 'You look tired,' 'You need a rest,' or 'You need medicine.' Such a mother runs to her little one, who thinks she has hurt her face by falling on the carpet, and says, moaning more childishly than her child, 'Mamma knows you are hurt.' The

better and more successful method for any mother to adopt is to say, 'Oh, never mind. You're not hurt, so don't think you are.' Presently the child forgets about the accident and is at play" (page 154). This is a course which, if somewhat Spartan, might be quite effective in the case of a minor accident or ailment, but which would be most grave if the child had really got some serious injury or disease. From time to time tragic results have happened in this way, reports of which have appeared in the Press. F. W. Peabody in his scathing exposure of Christian Science, "The Religio-medical Masquerade," quotes many cases of this "sacrifice of children," such as that of a little boy of ten, told by his mother to run away and play and treat himself as he had been taught, and dying among his toys.

If Mrs. Eddy had merely taught the importance of mental healing as an auxiliary to ordinary medical methods, instead of repudiating ordinary medicine altogether, and inventing an impossible system of metaphysics to account for her cures, she would have deserved nothing but praise. As it is, we cannot avoid the conclusion that she has done far more harm than good.

It is hardly necessary to protest that the scorn which Christian Science pours on ordinary medicine is quite unjustified. "Sickness has been combated for centuries by doctors using material remedies; but the question arises, Is there less sickness because of these practitioners? A vigorous 'No' is the response deducible from two connate facts—the reputed longevity of the Antediluvians, and the rapid multiplication and increased violence of disease since the Flood" (page viii, Preface). Well, well! Most of us are hardly bold enough to make assertions about the state of affairs "before the Flood," but we do know something about the last few generations. If centuries of medical practice have not banished disease, modern medicine and methods of sanitation and hygiene have done an

enormous amount towards relieving and minimising it. They have enormously lessened the death-rate, and added at least thirty years to our expectation of this mortal life; they have almost stamped out terrible diseases like plague, and would stamp out others if the public could be induced to follow medical advice; the discovery of antiseptics and anæsthetics has made possible miracles of surgery; and so on. One can only wish Christian Scientists could be removed from modern Europe or America, and put down in the insanitary and filthy conditions of a mediæval city or an Indian village; they would probably soon revise their opinions.

But we cannot regard our examination of this subject as complete until we have also considered what is called "faith-healing" or "spiritual healing." Mrs. Eddy claims that her methods of healing were those employed by our Lord Jesus Christ, which became neglected after the early days of Christianity, until they were again revealed to her. To suggest that our Lord and His disciples taught that disease is an illusion, and healed sufferers by dispelling the illusion is, of course, utterly unsupported by the New Testament accounts. But the statement that the Church neglected the business of healing until it was revived by Christian Science is also quite untrue. Religious healing has gone on all through the centuries from New Testament times, and in many parts of the Church still flourishes exceedingly. One of the best known modern centres of it is at Lourdes.

The grotto at Lourdes has been a centre of healing since 1858, when a peasant girl named Bernadette Soubirous declared that she had there received visions of the Blessed Virgin. It became a place of pilgrimage, and soon miracles of healing were claimed. Since then thousands of pilgrims have gone there every year, in the hope of being cured. The Roman Catholic authorities offer every facility for medical men to examine all reported cases of healing, and although they represent

only a very small proportion—it is said less than 1 per cent.—in comparison with the vast number of patients who go away unbenefited, there is no doubt that many genuine cures have taken place. So much is admitted even by those who are quite sceptical as to their religious origin. Deferring discussion of this point for a moment, let us briefly notice a few further facts as to the history of healing in the Christian Church.

We shall consider the place occupied by healing in our Lord's ministry, in the final lecture. Here we may simply note that He certainly commissioned His disciples to heal the sick as well as to preach the Gospel; and in the Acts of the Apostles we find accounts of cures wrought by them, while in St. Paul's Epistles the gift of healing is more than once mentioned along with preaching and teaching as one of the manifestations of the Spirit. In the Epistle of St. James there is a well-known passage: "Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."

After Apostolic times the practice of anointing the sick with oil as a religious rite—known as "unction"—became very common, and was continued for centuries, until its original healing intention was obscured, and it degenerated into the rite of Extreme Unction, intended only as a preparation for death. All through Christian history there are stories of healing wrought by Saints and holy men and women, and of miracles connected with shrines and relics. Most of us have been brought up, probably, to regard these miracles of the Saints as superstitious errors. Undoubtedly there was much superstition mixed up with them, and a good deal of unscrupulous trading on the supposed powers of relics and the like; but in many instances the stories of healing are well supported by evidence, and only mere prejudice can dismiss them all as fabrications.

But such healing did not end with mediæval times. Cures are said to have been wrought by George Fox,

the saintly founder of the Quakers, and by John Wesley; while to come even nearer to our own day, there are such celebrated examples as Prince Alexander of Hohenlohe and Father John of Cronstadt.

Prince Hohenlohe, who was born in 1794, was a man of saintly character who gave his property and his life in the service of the poor. He was ordained Priest in 1815, and very soon became famous throughout Germany for healing the sick through prayer and the laying on of hands. It is said that in the last year of his life no less than 18,000 people obtained access to him. Over all who came he prayed unceasingly, demanding from them a firm faith in God, and in many cases they are said to have been cured of their maladies. He died in 1849, worn out with this ceaseless strain on his vitality. Many instances of cures wrought by him have been fully and carefully recorded, and there is no doubt as to their remarkable nature.

The example of Father John of Cronstadt is even more recent, for he only died in 1908. His reputation for sanctity was known throughout Russia, and there are innumerable instances of healing wrought through his prayers. The fame of his healing powers became so great that enormous crowds thronged him, so that he was unable to cope with them all.

Many more examples of healing wrought by the prayers of saintly men and women might be given if time allowed. What are we to say about them? Does such religious healing fall into the same category as the mental healing which we have already considered? To a certain extent it undoubtedly does. The results obtained are clearly of the same order; and those who are not favourably disposed towards religion, especially, will dismiss them as due to "suggestion."

But we saw that the term "suggestion" does not in itself explain mental healing. The suggestion is only the "key" which unlocks the latent energy of the subconscious mind, a power which is God-given like the rest of life. It does not make the ways of God less

wonderful that we now know a little more about their working. He has planted in our minds a power which rightly liberated can assist to cure our bodies. One way in which it can be liberated is by the suggestion of a doctor, or of a Christian Science healer. It can also be liberated by religious influences, by a firm faith in the good will and healing power of Almighty God, as we see in the cures performed at Lourdes and other shrines; still more effectively, perhaps, when the faith of the sufferer is assisted by the prayers and personality of a really saintly man or woman.

But when we think of the highest examples of such healing, in which there has been a really true and deep faith, we cannot but feel that there is something more. Not simply is latent power in the mind liberated, but power is put into the mind by the Grace of God, whether directly through the sufferer's own prayers, or through the abundant spiritual life of one of God's saints. As we read the stories of John of Cronstadt, or Father Theobald Matthew, or Prince Hohenlohe, or St. Catherine of Sienna, or St. Francis, or St. Bernard, and many another, it seems clear that something goes out from the personality of the healer to assist the weakness of the sufferer. The extent to which mind can so act on mind, spirit on spirit, is at present quite undefined; but there is abundant evidence that such influence is possible and does sometimes take place. It is not to be thought of as a "miracle," in the sense of being contrary to nature, and one day we may learn more about the laws of its working. Must we not bring into the same category the works of healing done by our Lord Himself? They are not called "miracles" in the New Testament, but "works" or "signs," and surely He who was God's Son wrought His works, too, by God's laws.

It is impossible to set any limits to the possibilities of such healing where the spiritual power exerted is sufficiently strong. Although, as we have seen, what are called "functional" diseases are most amenable to cure by mental means, there are undoubted instances

of cure of organic troubles ; but there is no ground for asserting that we ought in practice to rely solely on such methods of healing or attempt to apply them to all cases. What place spiritual healing should hold in our own religion, and what should be its relation to ordinary medicine, must be the subject for our final lecture.

V. RELIGION AND HEALTH

IN the last lecture I tried to show the truth which, once we have disentangled it from the absurd philosophy with which it is encumbered, we find to underlie Christian Science. In our minds God has given us a power which, rightly used, can assist to bring health to our bodies and happiness to our lives. The strange thing is that this should ever have been forgotten by Christians, for it is dwelt upon again and again by our Lord. "Thy faith hath made thee whole"—not once nor twice but many times does He address some such words to those whom He healed. Where that faith was absent He was powerless to help. Among the people at Nazareth, who rejected him, "He could there do no mighty work. . . . And He marvelled because of their unbelief." Faith, an inner condition of receptivity and expectancy, was essential before He could put out His healing powers. Clearly He used the channel of the sufferer's subconscious mind, and if that channel was closed through lack of faith, the healing influence of His personality was ineffective. But "if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." In our minds there lies the ability to draw upon an infinite source of spiritual power if only we can use it. Mistaken and inadequate as is the theory of sects like Christian Science, they undoubtedly do attempt to draw upon that power; and although we are bound to condemn their errors and the absurdities and extravagance into which their uncritical thinking leads them, we will give them all due credit for having reminded some of us of the source of life and health which lies to our hands.

But if we would really use this power, we must do it

in the right way and for the right motives. One reason why we look with disfavour on healing cults like Christian Science is that so often they are motivated largely by cowardly selfishness. Their chief appeal is to fairly well-to-do people who only need freedom from bodily disease to make them thoroughly comfortable in this world. By stumbling upon the law of the unconscious mind they have found a way in which that can be partly achieved. God's laws can be used by all. His good gifts, as Christ taught us, are given to all: "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." The laws of mental healing can be exploited by the selfish as well as by the unselfish. In fact, our Lord clearly foretold that works of healing would be wrought by people whom He could not recognise as His followers: "Many will say unto Me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Thy name, and by Thy name cast out devils, and by Thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity."

This is an important point to notice, because simple people often take some remarkable cure which they have seen, or of which they have been told, as proof both of the saintliness of the healer and of the truth of the particular doctrines he professes. Experience shows that remarkable powers are sometimes exercised by the veriest quacks and impostors, and also—probably a greater danger—by people who are sincere enough but are so ignorant and unbalanced that they may cause a great deal of folly and harm. This warns us that the performance of healing by the adherents of Christian Science does not demonstrate the truth of their dogmas or the worthiness of their characters. Other tests must be applied to determine these things.

We must, therefore, quite clearly realise the purpose of Christ's works of healing. They were not primarily intended to proclaim some new way of escaping from bodily disease, but sprang from His love and mercy.

He healed people because He "had compassion on them," and could not bear to see their suffering. But He saw that this might even obscure the first object of His mission, and more than once He enjoined secrecy on those whom He healed: "He straitly charged him, See that thou tell no man." But He who saved others from suffering Himself endured the torture of the Cross. He did not come to earth to show us how to gain physical health and wealth and beauty, but how to live a life of perfect love and sacrifice for others; and that is a life which may, indeed must, entail the willing acceptance of suffering in some form or other. If your object is simply to attain bodily health and prosperity, then you had better see if Christian Science will give it you; Christianity is not intended for that. It is how to relieve the sufferings of others rather than how to escape his own that is the concern of the true follower of Jesus.

This primary lesson of Christ's works of mercy and healing the Church has learnt, in part at least. Care for the weak and the sick has always been one of her chief concerns. Almshouses, infirmaries, hospitals, are all Christian foundations, and it is one of the first duties of a Christian to give liberally of his substance to support these good works. Doctors and nurses who devote themselves to the care of the sick from motives of pity and mercy are truly following the example of our Lord and Master. We must stress this, for some people say that if she does not practise "spiritual healing" the Church is neglecting one of the direct commands of our Lord. That is not so. His command was simply to "heal the sick," and it is a command which every physician and surgeon and nurse is trying to carry out. If they are Christians, they will look upon their work as a Christian ministration just as much as is teaching or preaching or administering the Sacraments. If that fact is obscured, it is only because of the unhappy way in which religion in modern times has come to be regarded as a special department of

life, instead of something which touches every human activity.

But although the first aim of Christianity is service, which must involve sacrifice and possibly suffering, it does not follow, as some false representations of Christianity would suggest, that suffering is good or is deliberately sent to us by God. Just the opposite is true, for God is served by trying to relieve the suffering of the world. The healing works of Christ show us that pain and disease are not the will of God for men. How often on a tombstone, possibly that of a little child, does one see the words, "Thy will be done"—a cry of resignation and submission to the supposed will of God. He who healed the sick and restored the child of Jairus to life shows that disease and premature death are not the will of God; for He could not have acted against the will of His Father. It is in curing sickness, not in submitting to it, that we are obeying God's will.

Here, however, orthodox Christianity in the past has admittedly made a mistake. Sufferers have all too often been told that their pain is an infliction sent by God, and they have been exhorted to bear it patiently and meekly and resign themselves to the Divine will. Although pain borne in that spirit may in some cases lead to a wonderful strengthening of character and so to a higher good, there is no doubt that in others the effect of this attitude is bad. It presents a harsh conception of God; it lowers the sufferer's vitality; it drives him to think continually of the disease instead of thinking of the Divine healing power and life. The old Office for the Visitation of the Sick in the Church of England's Prayer Book is strongly marked by this unhappy view, which is sufficient reason for the fact that it is never used to-day. As a consequence the clergy have often come to be looked upon as heralds of God's wrath and harbingers of death instead of as messengers of love and ministers of healing and life. There still lingers in many people's minds the idea

that a clergyman is only to be called in to a sick-bed when the case is hopeless; and the sight of the parson by some patients is regarded almost as a death warrant.

This unhappy distortion of Christianity is deeply to be regretted, and must be combated with all the force we possess. We must emphasise again and again the truth that God is not the author of sickness and death, but of healing and life. By some means which we do not fully understand, disease, with other evil, has crept into the world—though we can clearly see that a great deal of disease, as of other evil, is due to men's folly and wickedness. It is said that more than half of human disease is directly or indirectly due to the two sins of drunkenness and unchastity alone—and it is bound to fall on us sometimes. But it is not the will and plan of God for us, and if we will open ourselves to Him, God will give us the power to overcome it.

No means in that fight is to be despised. Material methods are as much the gift of God as are mental or spiritual. In the days of our Lord modern scientific medicine was, of course, unknown; and such material methods of treatment as existed were mostly worse than useless. Naturally they found no place in His directions to His disciples. Since then the Spirit which leads men into truth has taught us much about the body and its working, and of material means of healing it; and it is wicked and ungrateful, as well as foolish, to ignore such knowledge. We need, then, to use every means that God has given. The doctor must do his best with his drugs, and the patient must aid by setting his mind free from preoccupation with his disease, and in real faith dwell on the beneficent will and healing power of God, assisted by the prayers and words of friends and pastors. All too often the friends of a sick person make the serious mistake of continually talking to him about his symptoms, and by their whole attitude deepening the hold of the disease on him. Let them instead draw his mind away from the thoughts of disease, not by the stupid and untrue suggestion that the disease is an

illusion, but by telling him of the love and power of God.

But while it is our duty to promote bodily health both in others and in ourselves—for a whole body in most cases is of more use to God in this world than a sick one—we must remember that spiritual health is even more important. Our Lord said first to the paralytic, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," and only afterwards, "Arise and walk." There have been many ailing bodies which have housed beautiful souls, shedding a holy influence of love and happiness around them. As I write I can think of more than one bedridden sufferer whose unfailing cheerfulness and thoughtfulness for others is the most powerful source of spiritual encouragement to those who know them. The Chaplain of a great London hospital has said that he is brought daily into contact with such wonderful courage, and patience and cheerfulness in the face of severe illness, that he feels less and less in sympathy with those who think the world would be a better place if all disease were abolished. Although God does not send sickness, in fact, an ailing body may nevertheless minister to His glory. But a hale body with a mean, selfish, ailing soul is of no use to God or man.

The first object of our religion is to give us that deep and unselfish love for God and our neighbour which causes us to think but little of ourselves, and to spend ourselves freely in the service of others. If we seek the grace of God to do that, we shall in most cases gain health of body also. Speaking of material goods, our Lord said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Seek spiritual health: love, joy, peace, good temper, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control—and most often physical health will be added unto you. But even if it is not you will have gained the most important thing, and it may be that God will use even your infirmity for His glory, as He used St. Paul's "thorn in the flesh."

But bearing in mind these important qualifications, there certainly is available for us a great source of spiritual power which may and should be used to promote health of the body as well as of the soul. This is true salvation. Salvation means literally "health." It is the same Greek word which is translated "save" and "make whole" in our English version. Christ said, "Thy faith hath saved thee," both to those whom He healed of bodily infirmity, and to those whom He redeemed from sin.

To use that power we must learn two lessons, which are contained prominently in the New Testament, but which Christians have all too often forgotten, and of which the "Mind-cure" movement, in spite of its errors and extravagances, has helped to remind us. The first is that "Practice of the Presence of God," which Christian saints and mystics have always commended to us. Recalling again the saying of F. W. Robertson, that every grand truth is the statement of two opposites, we have to realise that God is not only transcendent—"outside," "beyond" the universe He has created—but He is also immanent, dwelling in it and revealing Himself through it to those who seek Him. He is not a distant Being, a Creator who has set this universe going, and then withdrawn Himself into a far-away Heaven, to be approached only on formal occasions in church; but He is an ever-present reality, just as much with us in the home, the office, the train, the sick-room; and we can commune with Him anywhere in the quiet of our own souls.

The noise, the bustle, the feverish rush and hurry of modern life, with its thundering traffic, whirring machinery, blatant newspapers, and countless sources of distracting "pleasure," make all the more imperative the cultivation of a quiet inner retreat. We are constantly hearing of people who are suffering from "nervous breakdown," and "overwork." They are ordered by their doctors to go away for a complete rest, of mind rather than of body. How much more sane to take

that mental rest as it is needed, and set aside a certain time every day for quiet relaxation and meditation. But so feverish do many of us become that we say we are unable to take such rest ; it " bores " us, and we rush off to some still more distracting pleasure as soon as work is done. So the vicious circle continues, and with every increasing distraction the craving for it increases, until life becomes an ineffective scamper and hurry, with no real power or inspiration in it.

We must and can learn to practise mental relaxation, withdraw our thoughts from the busy world, and let ourselves sink in the infinite ocean of the Presence of God which surrounds us.

Speak to Him, then, for He hears ;
And spirit with spirit can meet.
Closer is He than breathing ;
Nearer than hands and feet.

The cultivation of the sense of the nearness of God is the highest kind of prayer. It is not easily attained, and must be reached step by step. Our Lord indicated three degrees of prayer when He said " Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." We begin by asking, when we think of God only as an external Being, to whom, as it were, messages may be sent. But we continue by seeking a closer relationship with Him ; and when we find it, the door opens to our knock, and we enter into His abiding Presence.

When we ask what is the way in which to realise this Presence of God, the answer comes, " I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." By meditating on the character and personality of Christ who reveals the eternal Father, and concentrating on the thought that He is alive for evermore, He becomes an ever-present reality to us. It is impossible to read the Acts and the Epistles in the New Testament without realising that the source of power which enabled the first Christians to achieve what they did was just this sense of the reality of the Presence of Jesus in the Spirit with them,

in every place and on every occasion. If we have not that we have not Christianity ; but if they had it, we can have it, for He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. We can cultivate this sense of His Presence in the Holy Communion ; in quiet times deliberately set apart in the solitude of our rooms ; by making constant little acts of recollection as we go about our ordinary tasks. The essential thing is that the thought of Christ should become a habit, penetrating down through our conscious minds into that sub-conscious region, which is the channel through which His power can energise our lives.

Our habits are the most important things about us. They make up the bulk of our ordinary daily life. We are what our habits are. Yet they are not born in us ; they are acquired ; they are the cumulative result of countless acts of choice, which have been made so frequently that they have almost ceased to exercise the conscious mind, but have been taken over by the sub-conscious, which is the spring of most of our behaviour. Of what use, then, is formal acknowledgment of Christianity, the religion of love and joy and power, if by habit we have become peevish, melancholy, ineffective ? The only thing is to set ourselves to change the habit, to set ourselves consciously to think about God as revealed in Christ, deliberately recalling Him, repeating the Name many times a day, till the thought of Him becomes completely habitual, and forms the constant background of our lives. Then, and only then, shall we have opened ourselves to Him, the source of power and life and health.

The second lesson, though it is really part of the first, is to think—and pray—positively rather than negatively. Sin and disease are real and terrible evils ; it is folly and mockery to deny it. Yet the surest way to overcome either is not by constantly thinking about them, but by thinking rather about goodness and health, just as a man walking along the edge of a precipice can only

keep his balance by fixing his eyes on the point to which he has to go, and ignoring the yawning chasm beneath him. If he begins to be fearful and to make great efforts not to fall, he is almost certain to do so. A great deal of the advice often given by spiritual directors, that we should constantly be reminding ourselves of our sins, and keeping on the watch against them, is not really the wisest. The more effective course is to fix the mind firmly on the good which is to be attained rather than on the bad to be avoided, putting into practice the counsel of St. Paul: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. iv. 8). By constantly thinking on the good, filling our minds with it, it will become part of ourselves, and will leave no room in us for evil: just as when a garden is filled with strong and sturdy flowering plants, there is no space left for weeds to flourish.

Let this be applied also to prayer. Let us pray for the good that we would have, rather than to be delivered from the bad, and pray with the faith that our prayer is being answered even as we utter it; that even as we are on our knees before God, His power is flowing into us, strengthening and saving us body and soul. "Therefore I say unto you, all things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them." So often our prayers are rather querulous petitions, with much doubt and misgiving behind them. If that is so, we need to make them more an exercise in the strengthening of our faith. We need to remind ourselves over and over again of the truth which we believe. It is not for nothing that the Church makes the recitation of the Creeds a regular part of her public worship. We need to make the affirmation of our belief a regular part of our private prayers also. Do we desire to pray for health of body or soul? Let us

first repeat again and again the words, "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life," until our faith becomes such that His life-giving power really can flow into us. Let us meditate more on the wonderful promises which Christ made with regard to prayer. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name He will give it you." "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Provided that we do ask in His name, ask, that is, for the things which He would have us desire—and no merely selfish request could come into such a prayer—then let us assure ourselves that He will give it us. Let us remind ourselves that God *wants* us to be good and happy and healthy; that so we can best work for Him; that He freely offers us the power to become these things, if we will take it.

If we can make prayer a positive, assertive thing, an active reaching out and grasping of the Divine love and power, instead of a weak crying or an impotent wailing, then we shall find that it is a real source of strength and life. "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force."

It is amazing how such words of Christ have been ignored by many who call themselves Christians. Religion has been presented as a negative, colourless affair; piety has been thought to consist in groaning over past sins; righteousness has been looked upon as the mere avoidance of wrong; salvation has been depicted as a desperate snatching from the tortures of Hell. No wonder that many people today do not realise that Christianity is, above all, a source of life and health and joy and power, providing we remember that they are to be used in the service of the God whose gifts they are. But when we do realise this we have no hesitation about our answer to Christian Science and the other mental-healing cults. In Christianity we already have all and more than they can give, and we have it untainted by selfish aims, and undistorted by absurd philosophies.

In conclusion, let us briefly consider what prominence the organised Church, in her official ministrations, should give to the promotion of bodily healing by spiritual means.

First, she should encourage the use of the right type of prayer directed to that end, both on the part of her individual members and corporately. Much may be done by small prayer groups. A method of corporate intercession which has proved very fruitful is for a small number of people to meet in an ordinary room, quiet and not too brightly lighted, so as to avoid distraction, the members preferably sitting in comfortable chairs so that the whole body may be relaxed. After a period of silence for preparation, the leader suggests the subject for prayer, in this case the healing of one who is sick; and then in silence every member in his own way "holds before God" the thought of the person for whom the prayer is desired. It is no part of our purpose here to discuss the theory of intercession; it is enough to say that many who have attempted it know by experience that it is a source of blessing.

A prayer group such as this must consist only of people who really can pray; but a number of such must exist in every congregation, and a group ought to be formed in every parish. Where this has been done it has proved a wonderful source of benefit to the spiritual life of the parish as a whole, as well as of particular blessing to individuals.

Then there is the Eucharist. Here, if we but realise it, lies an infinite source of life and health both spiritual and physical: "The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy *body* and soul unto everlasting life." Yet probably some of us have never really noticed that the preservation of the body is included at all! In the Eucharist we can draw near to Christ and gain His healing touch for our bodies as well as for our souls just as really as did the crowds of sick and suffering who thronged round Him in Galilee. Very rarely does one hear this healing power

of the Eucharist spoken of, yet it was well known to the early Church. St. Augustine wrote: "And for miracles, there are some wrought as yet, *partly by the sacraments*, partly by the commemoration and prayers of the saints." In many of the cures aided by the prayers of Prince Hohenlohe or John of Cronstadt, of whom mention has already been made, the Holy Communion was an instrument; and every parish priest must have been privileged to see recovery aided by this means.

May I be permitted to record a personal experience? The patient had been left by a severe attack of rheumatic fever almost helpless, unable to move hand or limb, and owing to her advanced age, the doctors had little hope of her recovery. She was a devout communicant, and at her request I administered the Sacrament to her. From that same day a remarkable improvement took place, and very soon she was able to leave her bed and get about again. Used reverently and with true faith, I am sure that the Holy Eucharist is a source of strength and blessing to the whole man, body as well as soul. When all communicants realise this, they will ask for the Sacrament to be brought to their sick-beds as naturally as they send for the doctor.

In prayer and the Eucharist we have means of health and healing which are available for us all. Some in the Church have recently revived a further ministration to the sick—the rite of Unction, or anointing with consecrated oil. This, as we have seen, was a widespread practice in the early Church, and is referred to in the Epistle of St. James. The sick person was anointed by the priest on the forehead or the breast with oil which had been previously blessed and set apart for the purpose, while prayers were made for his recovery. Gradually the healing purpose of the rite became obscured, and it degenerated into Extreme Unction, intended only as a preparation for death, and became surrounded with magical and superstitious ideas. Consequently it was thrown out of the Church

of England with other superstitions at the Reformation (though an attempt was made to restore the rite in its primitive form in the short-lived Prayer Book of 1549). Now that the old associations have been forgotten in our branch of the Church, many think that it should be revived as a healing ministration. It was sanctioned by the Lambeth Conference as long ago as 1908 should a patient desire it, and several forms of service for the purpose have been drawn up.

Another primitive practice which accompanied prayers for healing was the ritual laying on of hands. As we saw, there are some people who are entrusted with healing gifts, or rather with the power of arousing the patient's faith, which allows the Divine life-giving power to work. It is a natural gesture for such to lay their hands on those whom they are trying to help, as our Lord laid His hands on those who were brought to Him. Some urge that those who are so gifted should be definitely commissioned in the name of the Church to exercise the healing ministry. There are great practical difficulties which probably make such a course impossible; but, providing always that it is done reverently and with recognition of God as the source of all power, there can be no objection to those who may have such a gift helping their fellows in this way.

It must, of course, be clearly realised that no sort of magical efficacy is supposed to be attached to such practices as these; they are simply aids to the faith of the patient and his friends.

In recent years a number of guilds and societies have been formed within the English-speaking branches of the Church to develop and encourage the ministry of healing. In England we have the Guild of Health and the Guild of St. Raphael; in America there is the Society of the Nazarene; and there are others also. It is not our purpose now to discuss the methods of these societies or to offer criticism. Perhaps all that is claimed by their most enthusiastic adherents is not

altogether wise or balanced ; but they do call attention to the largely neglected possibilities of spiritual healing which we have in our Church, and I hope that we shall gradually arrive at a wise and reverent appreciation of the share which religion may take in the curing of the body as well as of the soul.

But as these possibilities become more widely realised we must guard against their exploitation by cranks and faddists, and against their being made the object of sensational "stunts." An atmosphere of sensationalism is very injurious spiritually, and therefore I think that healing missions, such as those conducted by Mr. Hickson, are not wise. Although their conductors may be people of exemplary faith and piety, they inevitably obtain great publicity, create an unhealthy atmosphere of excitement, and attract some who, without having any genuine religious faith, are ready to try any new "stunt" on the chance of a cure.

We have also to be very careful not to let wrong and superstitious ideas creep in. We must remember that religious healing was dropped in our branch of the Church largely because of the superstitions connected with shrines and relics and so on ; and if we would revive it now, we must take care that such things do not find their way in again. There must be no idea either of magical efficacy in the means employed or of coercing God to exert healing power. The power that there is in spiritual healing lies in the truth, as we believe, that God normally wills health for our bodies as well as for our souls. By faith we can allow His will to become effective in us. But we are doing wrong if we try to gain health of body while caring little or nothing for the far more important health of soul. We must realise, also, that although we believe that normally God wills us to have health of body, there may be cases where, whether owing to our breaking of God's natural laws or to some other cause, such is not possible. We should not attempt by spiritual healing to replace a limb which had been amputated ; and

there must be many other organic troubles of as fundamental a nature, though less obvious, which cannot be healed. There must also be many cases in which material means of healing, such as an operation, are essential. We have carefully to avoid all foolish exaggeration of the possibility of healing by spiritual means.

Nevertheless there does remain a great sphere in which it may be employed, and if all attempts to use it are done reverently, humbly, with an entire absence of conceit or self-assertion on the part of the healer, and with willingness to welcome and recognise all other methods of healing, then it may rightly and legitimately find a place in our ordinary religious practice. There will then be no possibility of conflict with ordinary medicine. Both the doctor and the minister of spiritual healing can, and will, work in harmony. The doctor, if he be a Christian, will welcome the assistance which the minister can give him; and the minister will defer to the technical knowledge and skill of the doctor, and consider himself under his orders. Such a combination represents the true fulfilment of our Lord's command to "heal the sick" in these modern days. Perhaps the ideal is reached when the two ministrations are carried out by the same person, as in the case of the heroic missionary-doctors in our mission fields, who care at once for men's bodies and for their souls, bringing to their task both the scientific knowledge which God has in these days entrusted to us and a firm faith in His power and goodness and love for all mankind.

NOTE I

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE TEACHING ABOUT DEATH

It seems advisable to add a note on the Christian Science teaching about Death. What does Mrs. Eddy offer in place of the Christian faith in the Life of the World to come? She insists again and again that there is no death, and that man is gifted with eternal life. "It is a sin to believe that aught can overpower omnipotent and eternal Life; and this Life must be brought to light by the understanding that there is no death" (page 429). If this meant what a Christian means, that man is an immortal soul who survives the dissolution of this earthly body which he for a time inhabits, to enter through the love of Christ on a fuller life beyond, her emphasis on this great Christian truth would be admirable. But she constantly links death with sickness and sin as an illusion, a false belief of "mortal mind."

"All that we term sin, sickness, and death is a mortal belief" (page 278). (In the Glossary) "DEATH: An illusion . . . the unreal and untrue. . . . Any material evidence of death is false, for it contradicts the spiritual facts of Being." "When the material body has gone to ruin . . . then mortals believe that the deathless Principle and Soul escapes from matter and lives on; but this is not true. Death is not a stepping-stone to immortality and bliss" (page 203). "Death is but another phase of the dream that existence can be material. . . . The dream of death is to be mastered by Mind" (page 427). Commenting on St. John viii. 52, "If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death," she says: "That statement is not confined to spiritual life, but includes all the phenomena of existence" (page 429).

It is obvious that by death she means the death of the body, and claims nothing less than that it would not occur if we ceased to believe in its necessity.

Instead of the Christian teaching about the Future Life and Judgment to come, with its warning to use well our opportunity here to prepare ourselves for the hereafter, she seemingly substitutes the idea of indefinitely prolonging this mortal life. To such absurdity does her "philosophy" lead. Yet she has died herself, and we have yet to hear of any Christian Scientist who has outlived the allotted span!

It seems small comfort to offer to those who stand by the death-bed of a loved one to assure them that he need not have died if only he and they had believed strongly enough that death is not necessary. In actual effect, probably, her emphasis on the fact of Life and minimising of the importance of material things does lead her followers to a real faith in the immortality of the soul, but it is a supreme example of the intellectual absurdity of her teaching that this should be linked with so preposterous a claim as that there is no death of the body.

NOTE II

"THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE PARENT CHURCH"

The body known as "The Christian Science Parent Church of the New Generation" was founded by Mrs. A. C. Bill shortly after the death of Mrs. Eddy. Mrs. Bill claims to be the successor of that lady, and vigorously denounces the orthodox Christian Science body, under their Boston Board of Directors, as a "counterfeit Church." It is an extraordinary fact that Mrs. Eddy apparently really believed that she would not die, and made no provision in the bye-laws of her Society for its government after her decease. She was its sole head, vested with autocratic power, and by her own rules officers to serve under her could only be elected with her written consent. When she did die in 1910, the Board of Directors had to obtain an injunction in the Massachusetts courts giving them power to assume the responsibility of government and the administration of her large fortune.

Mrs. Bill's organisation maintains that this was a wrong course, and that the correct procedure was to dissolve the whole body and reconstitute it under a new leader, who should fill Mrs. Eddy's place. Such a "living head," they claim, provides for the further development and evolution of Christian Science; whereas the present constitution of the Boston organisation renders it stereotyped and incapable of advance.

"The Christian Science Parent Church" claims, however, to be based entirely on Mrs. Eddy's writings, and apparently accepts all her philosophical and theological doctrines. The chief point in which it differs from the Boston organisation is on the question of co-operation with "material" medicine. The orthodox Christian Scientists repudiate all ordinary medical treatment, and will not permit their healers to co-operate with the medical profession (incidentally glossing over the fact that Mrs. Eddy herself received dental treatment under a local anæsthetic, and in her last painful illness was secretly attended by a physician and was given injections of morphine).

Mrs. Bill's rival organisation maintains that, the world not yet being ready for the whole-hearted acceptance of Christian Science, the mental healer must co-operate with the doctor, adding "the mental right convictions of the metaphysician to the practical work of the doctor and surgeon." Such a course is certainly to be welcomed, as removing one of the serious practical dangers to which Christian Science exposes its adherents; though we may be doubtful about the ingenious reasoning by which its advocates seek to reconcile it with Mrs. Eddy's philosophy.

Disease and death, we are told, are caused not simply by the false beliefs of the individual concerned, but by the "collective belief" of the majority of mankind. Mrs. Eddy herself "was the victim of the common conviction of the world that death is inevitable." Hence until the majority are converted to Christian Science they can never be overcome, for "the greater

controls the less." In the meanwhile we must accept an "intermediate" stage of healing, in which the Christian Scientist consents to use drugs when necessary, not, of course, admitting that they have any power in themselves, but "recognising them as parts of the phenomena of the human mind, embodied mental beliefs originating in the same mental substance as the body to which they are applied."

If this means that a dose of white arsenic only has power to kill me because it "embodies" the belief of the majority of mankind that it will do so; why has it still that power if it is taken by accident in mistake for something else, when the "majority of mankind," or those who know anything about it at all, presumably believe that it is something quite harmless? But it is unnecessary to devote any further criticism to this type of "reasoning." The fact is that it is not simply wrong, but *wrong-headed*, and betrays a fundamentally muddled type of mind. It is one of the essential rules of all intellectual enquiry that a simple and straightforward explanation of anything, if adequate, must be preferred to one which is highly involved and complicated. It is the failure to observe this simple rule which is largely responsible for most of the fads and "crankisms" with which we are afflicted in these days, from Christian Science to belief in the prophetic nature of the Great Pyramid.

Therefore, while we are glad to know that the members of this Christian Science sect do not entirely deny themselves and their children the benefits of medical skill, and in practice are ready to give to mental healing its rightful place as an *auxiliary* to "material" treatment, our criticism of their tenets still remains. And they are, of course, open to the same objections from the religious standpoint as the original body, for they accept all Mrs. Eddy's teaching about God and our Lord Jesus Christ, which we have seen to be so misleading and so inadequate.

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HAROLD ANSON. "Prayer and Bodily Health"—Essay in "Concerning Prayer," edited by Canon Streeter. (Macmillan.)

"Spiritual Healing." (London University Press.) Shows that spiritual healing means healing of the whole personality, aiming at bodily healing only through the building up of the character.

Also pamphlets and other publications of the Guild of Health, Guild of St. Raphael, Society of the Nazarene, etc.

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NO 27 '50

MY 22 '51

MY 14 '53

MY 13 '55

APR 20 '58

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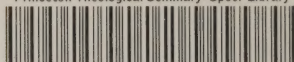
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